Ravenloft

Boxed Set

Cryptic Allegiances

The Secret Societies of Ravenloft

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Credits

Design: Bruce Nesmith and William W. Connors
Editing: Mike Breault
Cover Art: Clyde Caldwell
Booklet Cover Art: Stephen Fabian
Interior Art: Stephen Fabian and Bob Klasnich
Cartography: David C. Sutherland III and Dennis Kauth
Graphic Design: Roy E. Parker
Typography: Tracey Zamagne

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TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

oday I learned of The Secret. Torman has invited me to be one of the chosen few. I have always thought that there was more to the world than we are allowed to see. They keep things hidden from us, but they can't hide from the society. We know about The Secret. Someday we shall pry it from the lips of Those Who Know. Then we shall be the Keepers and rule over all!

From the Diary of an Initiate

What is a Secret Society?

In Ravenloft, a cryptic allegiance, or secret society, is founded on a single concept: conspiracy. All of its members are conspiring to achieve a common goal. This goal is one that would not be widely supported by the common folk or those in power, or else the society wouldn't need to be secret. Frequently most members of the society know only the broad aims of the organization. The details of the master plan are known to just a select few.

The members of a secret society tend to be scattered and few. They rarely know each other by sight or name. Secret symbols and signs are the only way they can identify each other. The members of a secret society can come from any walk of life, from peasant to noble, adventurer to scholar. Whomever they are, the members of a secret society are fanatical. They are so strongly devoted to their cause that they may even risk their lives for it.

The goal of the society can be good or evil. Many of them have goals that shouldn't even be judged on a good/evil scale. Some have goals that may not make sense to a rational mind. In most cases, there is a master plan to achieve the goal.

The master plan is frequently incomplete or requires many generations to fulfill. After all, if they had all the pieces right now, their quest would be over. The members of a secret society are constantly seeking the missing links or waiting for an auspicious time to launch the next phase of their master plan.

Secret Societies in Ravenloft

There is certainly nothing new or unique about secret societies. There have been secret societies such as the Templars and Rosicrucians throughout history. They exist in most of the AD&D® game's campaign worlds. In the Forgotten Realms, the Harpers are the most notable example of a secret society.

In the demiplane of Ravenloft, fear, despair, and horror are predominant themes. Some of the common folk of this place will latch onto any form of hope that comes along. Secret societies offer that hope. Instead of being a member of the downtrodden masses, a person can be one of the elite, in on The Secret and better than his peers. In short, there is hope in his life once more, hope that he will rise above the fear and despair of the land.

For this reason, secret societies are more prevalent in Ravenloft than in many other places. However, even given this increased presence, secret societies still encompass a very small segment of the population. Only a few thousand people in all of the lands of the core are members of secret societies.

It is always important to remember that the true power in Ravenloft is held by the lords of the domains. Secret societies wield very little power in the demiplane of dread. For all their secrecy and stealth, it is unusual for a society to have any significant presence in a domain without coming to the attention of its lord. Most lords keep tabs on the societies, but they do not interfere with the societies' activities. Why destroy an organization that might be useful someday?

Using a Secret Society

There are two primary uses for secret societies in RAVENLOFT® adventures. The first is that they can be the focus of an adventure. In this case, the society is the hidden mover and shaker that is advancing the plot. Usually this means the characters must foil whatever insidious plan the society is hatching.

The other primary use is as a motivator. In the course of an adventure, the players are sometimes confused. They don't know what to do, so they do nothing. In steps the secret society, whose members can help the characters over this hurdle. This usually means that they want the characters to accomplish the overall goal of the adventure, or at least something related to it.

On the other hand, a society opposed to the characters' goals may try to stop them, thus inadvertently goading the PCs into doing just the opposite of what that society wanted. Dire threats and attempted violence are the hallmarks of such coercion.

For example, if the characters have to sneak into a castle to further the plot, a secret society opposed to them might threaten them to "stay out of the castle or you'll never live to come out." What are the characters going to do? Sneak into the castle, of course!

Regardless of how secret societies are used in an adventure, they can always provide flavor and atmosphere. The dark mystery of secret societies fits very well into the Ravenloft theme. In order to maintain their veil of secrecy, the game master should use the societies sparingly. If the characters keep running into agents everywhere they go, these societies can't be very secret.

The Descriptions

Each secret society's entry in this book contains an initial description, goals, background, members, recognition, and headquarters sections. The initial description provides a general feel for the society. Frequently it is written from the point of view of a member.

A society's goals are very important. These are the driving forces behind the leadership of the society. In many cases, common members are unaware of the true goals of the society. When using a society to further an adventure, keep its goals firmly in mind.

The background section describes how the society came to be. This history can shed light upon the nature of the society and what drives it. In some cases, the full history of the society is shrouded in mystery.

The members of a secret society are generally organized in a quasi-military structure. Each person has a rank that grants him certain authorities and responsibilities. The primary benefit of rank to the member is a deeper understanding of The Secret.

It is rare for a secret society member to personally know more than a handful of other members. Therefore, it becomes necessary to form elaborate schemes and codes to identify each other. Many of these recognition schemes are easily imitated or faked. In general, most members of secret societies do not trust each other easily. The passing of a recognition code does not guarantee the legitimacy of the person. Frequently a society member withholds his trust until the person proves himself many times over in word and deed.

The headquarters of the society is not always a fixed location. In many cases it is a meeting place that the game master can use for an adventure. The game master should feel free to alter or enhance any headquarters map and description.

DARK DELVERS

here are dark secrets underground, where man was not meant to explore. The depths beneath our feet hold the ancient wisdom of bygone ages, wisdom used in the very creation of the world. Somewhere deep in the bedrock of the earth lies the hated mother, creator and despoiler all in one. From her bed in the wellspring of the world, she calls to her distant children, men willing to believe in her. To find her is to become one with creation and rule over all until the moment at which she decrees destruction.

Goals

The goal known to the common member of this society is to discover buried secrets. The implied assumption is that true power is to be found deep underground. Things live there that know secrets hidden from mankind.

The goal as understood by the inner circle of Dark Delvers is to find the hated mother. They search continuously for caves and tunnels that burrow deeper and deeper into the earth. As of yet, they don't know how to wrest from her the ancient secrets of power. If they found her tomorrow, they wouldn't know what to do.

In particular, they search the domains of Arak and Bluetspur. These mighty mountains domains must surely contain a passage down to the lowest depths of the world. Of course, few explorers in these places ever return to report their findings.

Background

The first Dark Delver, an unknown and unnamed man, dreamed one night of the hated mother. He saw her calling to him, her sinuous arms urging him forward. She spoke in a secret language, full of urgency and supernatural power. When he awoke, he was fluent in this mysterious language, which he called the mother's tongue.

Dark Delver legend has it that he explored the caves and tunnels beneath an unknown mountain, obsessed with the idea of finding the hated mother and learning all her secrets. He convinced a few others to help him, in exchange for sharing the power that he knew would soon be his. According to the stories, this first, nameless Dark Delver explored a previously undiscovered cave and found the way to the hated mother. He stole from her the secrets of her power, but she caught him and devoured his body and spirit.

The Dark Delvers believe that all supernatural power flows from the hated mother up through the earth and into the creatures of the land. Those creatures that live underground are closer to the mother and therefore inherit more of her power. The farther underground a creature lives, the more powerful it seems to be, further supporting their theory.

The Dark Delvers tend to use the themes of earth and water in everything. Since water is found in plentiful supply deep underground, obviously water is a source of subterranean power. Finding a new underground river is very exciting for a Dark Delver.

As a member rises in the ranks, he learns of the hated mother. He is also initiated in the ways of the dark passages. These are known tunnels that supposedly lead to the hated mother. In truth, they are tunnels and caverns that have not been fully explored. Any cave or tunnel that is a dead end is a false passage. By definition, all others are dark passages.

Members

All members of this secret society have a fascination with things subterranean. They are always looking for new caves or for ways to further explore old ones. Secret underground passages are particularly exciting to them. The Dark Delvers meet in dungeons, cellars, or caves.

There are four layers to the Dark Delver secret society: niches, fissures, pits, and the abyss. Each layer is composed of from three to ten members. It is rare for more than that many people in any given area to know of the society and be interested in joining. There are fewer than 750 members of the Dark Delvers throughout the lands of the core. The leader of each layer is in turn a member of the next layer. This pyramid effect ends with the members of the abyss. The leader of the abyss is known as the loathsome consort.

Members can leave a niche safely, relinquishing their membership in the secret society. In the eyes of the members of the abyss, nothing of any importance is learned in a niche. These low-level members are merely agents to be used to attain the ultimate goal. However, if such an agent starts to spread the word that the society exists, he may find himself at the bottom of dark pit—permanently.

Any member who leaves a fissure is killed on sight, but they are not important enough to hunt down. As long as they go away and don't talk, they are safe. Members of a pit or the abyss can never abandon the society. If they try to do so, they are hunted down and killed.

The Dark Delvers are primarily humans, but there are a number of dwarves too. Elves, halflings, and the like are usually shunned by this society. Strangely, so are gnomes. The abyss is currently composed of two humans, two dwarves, and a drow (dark elf). It is highly unusual for a drow to be involved with the Dark Delvers, but of all the elven races only the drow would be considered for membership.

Recognition

It is easy to believe that a person may be a Dark Delver. Anyone fascinated with rocks, caves, and underground passages is suspect. Occasionally a person may even claim to be a Dark Delver when in fact he has no connections to the society.

True members of the Dark Delvers can only be identified by their knowledge of their secret language, called the mother's tongue. New members of a niche know only a few words of it. The longer a person has been a Dark Delver, the more he knows of this secret language. In its written form, the mother's tongue is runic, composed of straight-line, stick-like characters.

In many cases, a Dark Delver may need to determine whether or not another person is a member of the secret society. A member rarely knows other members outside of his own group. Usually the Dark Delver makes some obscure reference to the "power below." For example, if the topic of conversation is political he might say "The Burgomeister has no power below the town." The proper response is any word or words in the mother's tongue. If instead he is asked to explain his strange statement, the Dark Delver explains that he merely meant the Burgomeister has no power outside the borders of the town.

Headquarters

The majority of Dark Delvers are found in the mountainous domains, such as Barovia, Dorvinia, Markovia, and Tepest. However, Nova Vaasa, with its easy access to all these domains, as well as Arak and Bluetspur, is home to many Dark Delvers.

The abyss can meet anywhere. However, they prefer the rocky, cave-riddled terrain provided by mountain ranges. Their most notable meeting place is a hidden cavern, called the Abyss of the Hated Mother, on the slopes of Mt. Nirka in the domain of Darkon. The caverns and tunnels are kept dimly lit. Most of the members have excellent night and low-light vision.

The Abyss of the Hated Mother

1. Entrance: This is the cave entrance on the northern side of Mt. Nirka, just inside the borders of the domain of Darkon.

2. Entrails: These maze-like tunnels are a natural formation. The Dark Delvers are familiar with every twist and turn of the tunnels. Any unwanted intruders can be easily attacked or separated before they reach the interior of the Abyss. The whole maze is full of traps, with only one safe path to the Halls of the Searchers and another to the Grand Hall.

3. Grand Hall: A large, natural cavern where the members of the abyss meet for official functions and ceremonies.

4. The Pit: The members of the abyss gather around this bottomless pit, casting bones and other offerings to the hated mother. They claim that the sounds made as the bones bounce from side to side down the pit can be used to foresee great events. No man has ever descended very far into this place and returned to tell the tale.

5. The Depths: This broad tunnel leads to a maze of downward spiraling caves and sink holes. This is the primary realm of exploration for the Dark Delvers who live and work in the Abyss of the Hated Mother. Somewhere deep under the fragile crust of the earth, these tunnels meet with those of the drow in Arak.

6. Bone Room: This cave is used to store supplies for the Abyss. On occasions it doubles as a prison.

7. Halls of the Searchers: These man-made rooms have been slowly carved out of living stone over the decades. Not all of them are shown on the map. They serve a variety of mundane purposes for the Dark Delvers.

8. The Descent: These stairs lead to further rooms and strange chambers used by the Dark Delvers.

Grandoch Khardoon

4th-Level Earth Wizard
Human Male, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	10	Str	17
Movement	12	Dex	12
Level/Hit Dice	4	Con	11
Hit Points	20	Int	16
THAC0	19	Wis	7
No. of Attacks	1	Chr	12

Damage/Attack: 1d4 (dagger)
Special Attacks: Spells
Special Defenses: Nil
Magic Resistance: Nil

Grandoch is a pale skinned man with wavy brown hair and a heavy beard. He is short and stocky, with heavily muscled arms. Grandoch always wears brown and black, frequently rumpled or disheveled clothes. He has a wild look to his eyes to makes some people nervous. He speaks with a hushed urgency that has some folks leaning closer to hear his every word, while others back up, uneasy about such intimate conversation with him.

Grandoch is a fissure in the Dark Delver's society. He leads a niche with eight members and is widely respected in his fissure. He is quite fanatical in his devotion to the earth and its underground secrets. He knows an amazing amount about rocks, minerals, and caves. He has the Direction Sense, Rope Use and Mining proficiencies.

For the last year, Grandoch has been leading explorations of the caves outside Bergovitsa in Nova Vaasa. The mountains that border Barovia have extensive caves that are as yet unexplored. Most folk know him only as a stone mason in Bergovitsa.

Grandoch always acts as if he knows something of great importance to the world. He gives the impression of bursting at the seams to tell everyone, but he is unable to trust anyone. He will not divulge the secrets of the Dark Delvers under any circumstances.

KARGATANE

In Darkon, Azalin holds control of the population through the Kargat. This unholy alliance of vampires is loyal to the lich. They in turn sponsor the Kargatane, which is comprised of normal mortals who have a fascination with immortality and blood.

Goals

The Kargatane seek the secret of immortality. The Kargat vampires have led them to believe that it can be attained by mortal men. Of course, they failed to mention the terrible price to be paid. The Kargatane are unaware of the supernatural nature of their masters. Although the Kargatane are loyal to their undead masters, they still seek to steal from them the secret of eternal life. From their point of view they are merely trying to become the equal of their masters so that they may more fully share in the fruits of immortality.

Background

Early in their history, the Kargat vampires recognized that for all their power, they were limited. Unable to move about during the day, the vampires could not control completely the mortals that Azalin gave them as charges. They needed mortal agents among the living.

The lich lord of Darkon researched the very nature of vampires for a solution. Azalin discovered that if a vampire drank from a living man, and then passed back to the host a single drop of blood, the host becomes the devoted slave of the vampire. Blood from another source did nothing, and more than a single drop could cause insanity.

Armed with this knowledge, the Kargat went forth into the world. Disguising themselves as normal men, they offered the secret of immortality to a select few. They choose their victims well. Only those whose lust for power was great enough to overcome the horror of the process were invited. These few became the second circle of the Kargatane.

The method of their seduction did not reveal the true nature of their masters. By using sleeping droughts and other mind-numbing potions on their victims, the vampires were able to drink and return a single drop of blood without their victims comprehending the process. The second circle members merely believe that they have been inducted into the society and gifted with unnatural longevity. They know that drinking blood is part of the secret; however, since they were drugged, none of them remembers that their masters drank directly from their veins with their monstrous fangs. The Kargat vampires even show them a strange, two-tined blade, claiming that it is integral to the ceremony.

Like Mordenheim's monster, the Kargatane soon burst the confines of their master's control. Although the second circle is loyal to the vampire master, they are not enslaved. They can, and do, have independent goals of their own. The second circle began to secretly recruit other members, normal humans not privy to the kiss of the Kargat. While the vampires controlled the second circle, the outer rim of members was beyond their control.

Now the Kargatane seek immortality. The second circle knows that their masters, whom they call the ring of immortals, have the secret of eternal life. They do not know that their masters are undead monsters that feed from the living. They seek to steal the formula for eternal life from their masters.

The outer rim knows only that if they are loyal and follow orders, someday they may be invited to sip from the cup of immortality. They know that the second circle is not immortal but possesses unusual longevity.

As for the Kargat, they recognize that the Kargatane are not what they intended to create. However, the society still serves its original purpose. Therefore the vampires of Darkon continue to let it exist and even support it on occasions.

Members

As mentioned above, all members fall into two groups, the second circle and the outer rim. Members of the second circle have tasted the blood of eternal life. Members of the outer rim are normal people who have been seduced by the prospect of eternal life.

Each Kargatane of the second circle makes contact with his Kargat master once every few months. At that time, the master renews his loyalty by drinking from him and passing back a single drop of blood.

A member of the second circle gets several benefits from his close physical association with vampires. Each year in which he gets at least one drop of his own blood from the vampire counts as only one season toward his total life span (1/4 the time). For example, a member of the second circle ages only five years every 20 years—one season for every year.

If the person receives more than one drop of blood in a one-month period, he must make a madness check. It doesn't matter if it is just one extra drop or a whole bucket full, there is only one madness check. The extra blood forces the drinker to experience the true nature of being an undead vampire. It is enough to warp or break any man's mind.

For the first month after drinking the blood, the second circle member has Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution of 18. If the character's attributes are already 18 or higher, there is no effect. Occasionally a Kargat vampire will give one of his Kargatane a drop of blood to help him perform a particularly arduous task.

A single Kargat may have up to a dozen Kargatane servitors. This is not a physical limitation, merely a practical one. Since it gets tedious to maintain that much contact with the outer world, most Kargat vampires keep only three to five Kargatane in their sway. Few Kargat even participate in the Kargatane rituals. Most do not bother to create mortal servants in that manner.

Members of the second circle cannot be convinced that their masters are truly hideous

undead monsters. If confronted with knowledge of a vampire or even if they personally meet one, they insist that *their* master is not one. They will even repeat the lore taught to them by the Kargat—any member of the second circle who attempts the ritual of immortality is doomed to fail. Because he doesn't know the final stages of the secret, he will perform it incorrectly and become a vampire rather than attaining true immortality.

No member of the outer rim has ever knowingly met a vampire master of the Kargatane. Some have met them in other guises, not knowing how horrifyingly close to true immortality they have tread.

Some members of the outer rim have contact with members of the second circle. Many know only a few other members of the outer rim. Those fortunate enough to know someone in the second circle may meet with him irregularly. These are usually group gatherings during the day, where the second circle member whispers of the secrets of eternal life that can be gained, if the initiate is patient and loyal.

In these gatherings, there is always the communal sharing of blood. It is usually taken from a sheep, pig, or other animal. A cup of the red fluid of life is passed around and each member takes only a small sip. The Kargatane believe that immortality is achieved through the drinking of blood. If they only knew how horribly right they were.

Recognition

The Kargat lords have no problem being recognized. If the vampire does not want to be recognized, he is not. His control of himself is so complete that he can spend an entire evening with a Kargatane and remain unrevealed. If he wants the society member to know him as a lord, he need only stare into the unfortunate's eyes for a moment. Any member of the second circle immediately knows that he is in the presence of a master.

The Kargat vampires never make intentional contact with the outer rim. If they need an agent and the only reasonable choice is a member of the outer rim, the vampire either makes him a member of the second circle through the proscribed ritual, or else merely charms him. In either case, the person is likely doomed. Kargat vampires dislike having their hands forced into any action. They are quite likely to kill the agent when he is no longer useful, even if he is now of the second circle.

The matter becomes much more subtle when a member of the society is trying to identify another member of the Kargatane. He will prick his finger or otherwise cause a small cut to well up a drop of blood. He then sucks the blood, a surprisingly common thing for people to do, while staring directly at the person in question. A Kargatane will respond with "To drink is to know."

Members of the second circle bear the marks of the vampire. They are easily identified by others because they have twin puncture mark on either their wrists or necks. They believe these to be the marks of the two-tined blade mentioned above. Like all vampire victims, Kargatane do everything in their power to hide these wounds, even resorting to makeup.

Headquarters

There is no common headquarters for the Kargatane. Each member of the second circle meets his Kargat lord wherever that lord wishes. No two Kargat vampires are ever seen together by the Kargatane.

When the second circle meets with the inferiors from the outer rim, it is usually in mausoleums or the dungeons of ruined chapels. Although they do not know about the vampiric nature of their masters, they instinctively seek out places that would appeal to undead. Wherever they meet, it is in secret.

The Kargatane are scattered across Darkon and into Lamordia, Falkovnia, Tepest, and Dementlieu. All told, there are fewer than 50 members of the second circle. Most of them don't know each other. There are about 400 members of the outer rim.

There is a representative floorplan of a

ruined cathedral on the map. It can be used as a Kargatane headquarters or a Kargat vampire lair.

1. Sanctum: When it was used as a cathedral, this is where the priests performed their most holy rites and ceremonies.

2. Pulpit: This is where the priests addressed the masses gathered in the worship hall.

3. Cradle of the Articles: An iron gate encircles this small space. Inside is where replicas of the ancient relics were kept for the masses to view. To either side are stairs leading up to the sanctum and down to the inner sanctum.

4. Worship Hall: Rotted wooden benches line the space between the rising columns of stone. The arched ceiling is 30 feet overhead. There are several large holes in the roof. Underneath each is a pile of timbers and stone and crushed benches. Leaves and debris litter the floor everywhere.

On the other side of the massive columns are a second floor and third floor balcony. The third floor balcony is where the musicians would play and sing during ceremonies.

5. Wings: These portions of the cathedral are filled with the rooms and offices that were used to administrate the temple, spanning three separate floors. None of the actual rooms are diagrammed on the map.

6. Priest's Entrance: Ascending this stair, the priests could enter the worship hall on the third floor balcony.

7. Nave: This entry room has three large doors leading to the outside world. One of the doors is missing, leaving a dark, gaping hole into the inky recesses of the cathedral. The roof of the nave can be reached via three heavy wooden doors. The priests could walk out onto this large balcony and address the faithful gathered outside the cathedral. This is also where public displays for the holidays were placed for all to see.

8. Bell Tower: Rising over 75 feet into the cloudy skies of Darkon, this pointed bell tower has five floors. The bell ropes themselves are on the second floor. The third, fourth, and fifth floors are punctured by a large hole through which the ropes hang. The fifth floor has several large, arched openings that let the sound of the bells peal out over the countryside. The bells have not been rung in decades.

9. Inner Sanctum: This is where the true articles and relics of the faith are kept. Only priests or purified faithful were allowed into this room. Iron gates at the base of the stairs prevented any unwanted intrusion.

10. Secret Passage: A secret door under the Cradle leads to the vaults below. If the cathedral was ever in danger, the priests could take the relics and hide them down among the royal tombs and crypts of the holy men.

11. Descent into the Crypts: This is the main entrance into the crypts. Each wing had its own entrance.

12. Royal Vaults: The walls of this large chamber are lined with burial crypts, usually stacked three high. In the center of the room, flanked by sturdy columns, are the royal vaults. There are three of them, each devoted to the family of a particular baron or count that ruled the region, and his family. To be buried here, he had to have supported the temple in a significant and public way. Not many rulers qualified.

Kirstina Mzalich

5th-Level Warrior
Human Female, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	5	Str	15
Movement	12	Dex	12
Level/Hit Dice	5	Con	16
Hit Points	33	Int	10
THAC0	16	Wis	10
No. of Attacks	1	Chr	9

Damage/Attack: 1d8 (scimitar)
Special Attacks: Nil
Special Defenses: Nil
Magic Resistance: Nil

Kirstina is a middle-aged woman of 43 years, with black hair, shot with premature gray. Her body is hard and sinewy, and her skin is laced with scars from minor skirmishes. She tends to wear a yellow tunic with black pants, although she owns clothing with other color schemes. Almost all of her clothes leave her arms bare to the shoulder, making her look like a blacksmith or other laborer.

Kirstina has been a member of the second circle of the Kargatane for seven years. Biologically she is only 38 years old. Her influence among the Kargatane is not great, but she is a valued and frequently used servant. She is in contact with a number of the outer rim, mostly warriors and laborers. Her Kargat lord is Valric, a minor noble in the town of Viaki. She sees him only a couple of times a year. Most of the time she masquerades as a sword for hire.

Like many female warriors in Darkon, she is immediately noticed by all, but dismissed as irrelevant. Kirstina has vowed to make them all pay for casually dismissing her because she is a woman.

Kirstina hungers not so much for immortality, but for eternal youth. She fails to understand that one does not imply the other. Her time on the battlefields has impressed upon her the frailty of human life. She abhors the thought of growing old and seeks to slow down the rapid pace of time.

Greenway Arber

1st-Level Bard
Half-elf Male, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	10	Str	11
Movement	12	Dex	13
Level/Hit Dice	4	Con	10
Hit Points	20	Int	14
THAC0	19	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	1	Chr	15

Damage/Attack: 1d4 (dagger)
Special Attacks: Nil
Special Defenses: Nil
Magic Resistance: Nil
Climb Walls: 50%
Detect Noise: 20%
Pick Pockets: 30%
Read Languages: 5%

Greenway is of normal height and slim build. His youthful face is bright and clean shaven. He wears gaudy colors, resplendent with dyed feathers and jingling bells. He has a light step and a quick wit. Greenway is only 27 years old.

This youthful half-elf is a member of the outer rim of the Kargatane. His contact in the second circle is Kirstina Mzalich. He wanders all of Darkon, and occasionally the other domains, listening and prying into places better left undisturbed. Born and bred in Darkon, he does get the "know a little bit about everything" bard advantage in that domain.

Denied the long-lived heritage of his elven father, Greenway has vowed to dance on his father's grave. He has no desire to kill his sire, but rather to outlive him. He is in no way enamored with Kirstina, nor she with him. She is merely a doorway to the secret of his dreams—immortality!

ILDI'THAAN

he dreams, oh, the dreams! To walk again among the elysian fields of the mind. The secrets of the Ildi'Thaan shall someday be ours to hold again. It is our rightful heritage to regain the peaceful sleep and plunder the treasures of the elder masters. They hold the keys to the inner power of the mind, power greater than magic itself!

Goals

The Ildi'Thaan want to discover the lost secret of their ancestors. They seek after the 13 texts of Thaan, which together describe how to recover the ancient knowledge. With this knowledge, they believe that they can lay claim to the treasures of Bluetspur. More importantly, they believe that it will open up the secrets of the mind. Anyone reading the texts will supposedly be granted power to make wizards tremble.

Background

About 150 years ago the people of Thaan once lived on the slopes of Mt. Makab. They knew of the horrors that lived below the rocks, but were able to survive there nonetheless. They were protected in some unknown manner from this danger. According to legend, one day a dense mountain fog descended upon their lands, swallowing them whole. When it lifted, the Thaani people were gone. Villages and towns were left empty, devoid of any human life.

Not all were in their homes that day. Those people in the fields or away from their home

town or village survived. They knew nothing of what had happened to their family and friends. Upon entering the towns and villages, they found them deserted. There were no clues as to the whereabouts of the citizens of Thaan.

That first night after the discovery of the horror, everyone left alive suffered from horrible nightmares. Many of them went insane, gibbering about unspeakable monsters slithering up from the depths to devour everything in sight. Those Thaani who were still sane fled the mountain, convinced it was haunted by the spirits of the missing.

Their once-friendly mountain was now ringed by a wall of mist. Half-formed aberrations drifting through the fog convinced the people to keep moving. Finally they found refuge in the lands of Barovia in the town of Immol. According to the legend, there were only 13 survivors of Thaan. Some stayed in Immol, while others moved on, restlessly searching for some place to hide from their own memories and haunting dreams.

Before going their own ways, the 13 survivors created 13 texts. When gathered together, they would reveal the whole tale of the Thaani, including the secret of their power over the elder masters. If even one text is missing, the rest are useless. Each survivor was charged with safeguarding a text.

Some people still remember the tale of Thaan. Every now and then a madman wanders down from the mountains of Bluetspur into Kartakass, Barovia or Hazlan. Some mention the Ildi'Thaan as if that were their name for their own race. They jabber about the elder masters and unspeakable horrors. This tends to support the theories of those who believe in the legends of Thaan.

The Ildi'Thaan was supposedly formed by the only known person to get out of Bluetspur sane. The legend of Thaan was over a century old at the time. He never spoke publicly of his experiences in that domain, but began to secretly recruit people who dreamed of great power and wealth. He spun them a tale of learning the hidden powers of the mind and the riches to be found in the hidden passageways of the elder masters.

Members

Ildi'Thaan attracts those who believe in the inner power of the mind but shun the practice of magic. It spins a seductive web of power and gold for whomever is clever enough to obtain the secret. As a result, there are no wizards in the Ildi'Thaan. There are also no true psionicists in the society, since they are painfully aware that the hidden powers of the mind are acquired through discipline and hard work, not through some mystical mumbo jumbo. Ildi'Thaan members tend to be greedy and willing to perform any service for the right price in gold.

The rumored leader of the Ildi'Thaan is the legendary Chorin Mur'Thaan. He is supposedly the founder of the Ildi'Thaan, and the only sane man to ever escape Bluetspur. Given the dates involved, it is quite possible that even if Chorin existed, he is now dead.

The membership of the Ildi'Thaan is divided into the echelon and the hopeful. Members of the echelon are all reputed to have a psionic wild talent. The hopeful are just normal people. They never see the faces of the echelon. Echelon members always wear blood-red robes and hoods when meeting with the hopeful. Among themselves, they do not hide behind the hoods.

The hopeful who have proved themselves to the echelon are awarded a red sash, which is to be worn only at ceremonial occasions. They are still considered to be members of the hopeful, but they are now entrusted with missions of substance and some small bit of secret knowledge. They are referred to as the hopeful of the sash.

Since not everyone who tries develops psionic wild talents, the society still has a place for those who try and fail. They are never permitted to sit among the echelon since they are clearly not worthy. Their sashes are marked with a black stripe. Technically they have the same level of authority as the hopeful, but in practical terms they are granted more

responsibility. The lore of the Ildi'Thaan says that they shall have another chance to prove themselves when they confront the elder masters.

Recognition

The easiest way for any echelon member to prove himself is to demonstrate his special power. Of course others in the demiplane may have such powers, but this will convince most members of the hopeful that they are dealing with a genuine member of the echelon and not just a guy in a red suit.

The Ildi'Thaan have developed an elaborate set of hand signals. The signs are not very subtle. The person seems to be casting a spell or attempting an arcane form of sign language. It is a complete enough system that long-standing members of the society can carry on entire conversations silently.

Among those who are not fortunate enough to develop the psionic powers to join the echelon, this is the easiest way to recognize other members. If the Ildi'Thaan does not get the proper response to his hand signal query, he knows that he is not dealing with another member of the society.

Headquarters

The exact location of the Ildi'Thaan headquarters is unknown. However, it is somewhere in Barovia, near the village of Immol. Only echelon members are allowed to go there. Floorplans of the small ruined castle known as Irkat Thaan are provided on the map. The whole place looks abandoned and overgrown. There is little evidence that it is the secret headquarters of the Ildi'Thaan.

Most meetings of the Ildi'Thaan are held outdoors in hidden groves of trees. Most are held in the early morning. In Barovia or Kartakass, it is not uncommon for members to spy a lone wolf watching from deep under the trees. So long as the Ildi'Thaan are not a irritant to the lords of these domains, they are allowed to exist. Besides, why destroy the society when it may be able to serve you some day?

1. Main Keep: This is the innermost building of this nameless castle. The Ildi'Thaan call it Irkat Thaan, but its original name is lost in the mists of time. The great, circular tower is where the now forgotten owner lived with his family. Most of the walls are still standing, but the windows are gaping holes. The roof is gone, devoured by ravenous wind and rain. Even the gate at the top of the ramp is gone, stolen a century ago to provide iron for plowshares.

2. South Tower: Mostly intact, the only access into this tower is from inside the keep. The base of the tower is 60 feet below the base of the keep. In the floor of the lowest room of this tower is a secret trap door that leads to a steep, narrow stair. The stair descends 100 feet below the earth to the hidden chambers of the Ildi'Thaan.

3. Second Bailey: This outdoor courtyard is also 60 feet below the floor of the main keep.

Lines of rubble mark where the walls once stood. The east side has a thick retaining wall 30 feet high. Over the top of this wall is the outer bailey.

4. Outer Bailey: The walls that once surrounded this courtyard are now nothing but low mounds of rubble. Part of the wall of a circular tower still stands, overlooking the second bailey. The broken wall beside it looks down 30 feet into the second bailey. To the north, a large portion of the curtain wall still stands. The ramp leading up to the keep gate is intact.

5. Gate Tower: A pair of towers once flanked the entrance into the castle. Only the southern tower still stands. In the floor of the tower is another secret trap door leading to the underground hideaway of the Ildi'Thaan.

6. Guard Tower: Once used as a overlook defensive point for the road, this tower is connected to the underground rooms of Irkat Thaan. The Ildi'Thaan use it to watch for intruders and loyal members approaching the castle.

7. Chambers of the Ildi'Thaan: The rooms shown are not necessarily all of the underground chambers beneath the castle. Although most meetings are held outdoors, there is still a need to make plans and hide strange weapons from the prying eyes of the world. Such things are kept here, in the hidden rooms beneath Irkat Thaan.

Rasputin Khrinitov

2nd-Level Warrior
Human Male, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	10(4)	Str	14
Movement	12	Dex	10
Level/Hit Dice	2	Con	15
Hit Points	12	Int	12
THAC0	19	Wis	13
No. of Attacks	1	Chr	10

Damage/Attack: 1d8 (battle axe)
Special Attacks: Nil
Special Defenses: Nil
Magic Resistance: Nil

PSPs: 26
Psionic Powers: Mind Bar, Telekinesis

Rasputin is tall and gaunt, with a deep, resonant voice. He has blond hair that coils around his balding pate. Well past the prime of his life (40s), Rasputin's face is deeply grooved and his watery blue eyes are large and luminous. He is a meticulous dresser, preferring mild, pastel tones with a dash of bold color, almost always deep red.

Although he is only a wild talent psionicist, Rasputin is an unusual specimen. He not only has a psionic devotion (mind bar) but also a science. Once a warrior, he still has some skill with arms and armor.

In the ranks of the Ildi'Thaan, Rasputin is a respected member of the echelon. His unusual psionic gifts have paved the way for his rise in the ranks. He has contact with many of the hopeful in Hazlan where he lives. Most folk know of him only as a money lender in the town of Toyalis.

Rasputin is a quiet man, speaking only when necessary. He is extremely self-reliant, rarely giving credence the praise or criticism of anyone. He is tolerated but not well liked in Toyalis. He is quite careful not to reveal his psionic powers to anyone. In the presence of an irate wizard, he is likely activate his mind bar.

ATA-BESTAAL

he power is the beast, and the beast is power! Never could my child have been cursed as she says. It must be that she has been destined for greater things. She has been gifted with the beast, and now is closer to the true nature of men. She has taken a step forward into the past, returning to the glory of her ancestry. I must find the way to help her finish her journey.

Goals

The Ata-Bestaal want to become simple animals of nature. They believe that animals are as smart as people. However, being innately wiser and in harmony with their world, beasts do not need the trappings of society, magic, and tools. The Ata-Bestaal believe that if they can find a way to become beasts, they will receive the bounty of animal peace and serenity.

The members and leaders of this secret society are interested in any process that brings man closer to his animal nature. About a decade ago they learned of the existence of lycanthropy. This is very exciting for the Ata-Bestaal, since it is a process that changes a man into an animal, even though the change is strictly temporary.

Should the Ata-Bestaal ever find a formula for turning men into beasts, they would apply it immediately to their whole nation. The will of the people is unimportant, since the society is inspired by higher goals.

It would seem that the conversion process of Zhakata that created the mongrelmen would be highly attractive to the Ata-Bestaal. They want more, however. The mongrelmen are revered as being closer to the purity of animals than normal men, but most members also recognize that this is a dead end path. No one has been able to find a way to regress a mongrelman further back to the animal state. Members of the Ata-Bestaal do not fear the ceremony, but neither do they embrace it or desire it. This lack of fear frustrates and worries Yagno Petrovna, the lord of G'Henna.

Background

In the domain of G'Henna there are regular ceremonies in which men are transformed into mongrelmen (see the entry in the RAVENLOFT® boxed set). The wretched creatures are then sent to live in the hills, away from the towns and villages of the domain. These pathetic creatures had family members and loved ones who were forced to watch the transformation. Most of the citizens are so zealous in their faith that they would willingly send their own family members to this fate.

The bonds of love and family are sometimes stronger than even the powers of Ravenloft. Some of the relatives of these transformed wretches rebelled at the sight of their loved ones reduced to bestial creatures. They formed a secret society dedicated to helping their lost children, lovers, and siblings. At first they would just bring food and the comfort of their company. After a while, the conflict between their worship of Zhakata and their bond to the mongrelmen became too much to bear. Slowly these people began to believe that their bestial loved ones were not cursed, but rather blessed. They became convinced that Zhakata's curse was not an evil thing, but a good one. By viewing their world through these rose-colored glasses, they could live with the other loyal citizens of G'Henna and with the fate of their beloved.

Of course the rest of G'Hennan society is not yet ready for this revelation of Zhakata's true blessing. Only the chosen few have been permitted to know of the wonder. It is a well known fact that anyone caught aiding the mongrelmen of the hills will be severely punished. For the time being, this secret

society must remain hidden.

About 12 years ago, a member of the Ata-Bestaal witnessed a lycanthrope change form and lived to tell about it, although he was not bitten. For the next few years, members flung themselves before any lycanthrope that they could find. Most died gruesomely. Finally, one poor wretch survived. Upon returning to the society, he was promptly incarcerated. The Ata-Bestaal had entered a new age.

Currently, the society is holding a werewolf, a wererat, and a jackalwere in underground cells. None of these are true lycanthropes, but rather Infected members of the Ata-Bestaal. The society uses these creatures to infect members with lycanthropy to bring them closer to an animal-like state.

Members

At one time, the bulk of the members of the Ata-Bestaal had loved ones who were mongrelmen. However, now this is only a small segment of the society. The majority of members are now people that have rebelled against the status quo of G'Henna and have been convinced that the return to nature espoused by the Ata-Bestaal is the true path to salvation. There are even a few mongrelmen who are active members, although most mongrelmen lack the intelligence to be of much use. There are about 100 total members of the society in G'Henna.

On the night of the full moon, new members are initiated by forcing their left arms through the bars of the cage and letting a ravenous lycanthrope maul them. If the initiate survives and is infected, he becomes a full member of the society. If he survives but is not infected, he is still a member of the society, but is considered to be a failure, rejected by nature itself. He can serve in a lesser capacity, particularly by caring for the mongrelmen of the hills. Roughly 70% of the society's members are infected lycanthropes.

Between full moons, the members of the society gather together animals and people (usually traitors to the Ata-Bestaal). These are imprisoned in the headquarters until the next full moon. On the night of the full moon, the members of the society gather for a gruesome feast. For so long as they remain under they influence of their affliction, the members revel in their animal nature. They slay anything in sight, sometimes even each other.

There is no hierarchical organization to the society. Each member knows a few other members, who in turn know a few others, forming a web of seemingly random linkages. Somewhere in the center of this web is Mikki Kasparis and the other leaders of the Ata-Bestaal. Information tends to flow into, and orders flow out from, the center of this network.

Recognition

The Ata-Bestaal has the simplest of recognition schemes. It is a broad grimace, showing bared and clenched teeth. In most cases, it is not be confused with a smile. Having a mongrelman vouch for you is another way to gain introduction to members of this secret society.

Such simple security procedures lead to many society members being captured. Infiltrating the organization is relatively simple. However, since Yagno Petrovna's most fearsome punishment holds little power over these folk, they rarely reveal the names of other members of the Ata-Bestaal. Few agents have penetrated beyond the outer fringes of the web. The initiation rite ensures that only true believers gain the full confidence of the group. Those agents who are caught usually feed the rest on the night of the full moon.

Headquarters

In the northern hills of G'Henna, close to the border of Darkon, the Ata-Bestaal has a secret, underground headquarters. They have a large, central underground cavern that can be sealed. This is where the monthly carnage takes place. The prisoners and animals are released into the cavern. The society members lock themselves inside the cavern,

with failed members standing outside. When the affliction has subsided, sometimes several days later, the failed initiates open the cavern and release the satiated lycanthropes.

Mikki Kasparis

Human Female, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10(8)	Str	16
Movement	12	Dex	10
Level/Hit Dice	1	Con	14
Hit Points	7	Int	11
THAC0	19	Wis	17
No. of Attacks	1	Chr	14

Damage/Attack: 1d6 + 1 (spear)
Special Attacks: Nil
Special Defenses: Nil
Magic Resistance: Nil

Mikki Kasparis is a broad-shouldered woman with a full, black beard and thick, black hair. Her eyebrows are so thick that they meet over his nose to form a single black bar over her eyes. Her hands are short and thick, perfect endings to her meaty arms.

In town, she is a blacksmith. She keeps her hair pulled back into a short pony tail. She wears rough, rural clothing designed to last. Around her neck she wears a silver pendant of a wolf's head. She keeps this hidden under her tunic. She has been known to wear leather armor and carry a spear in times of trouble.

Mikki is the current leader of the Ata-Bestaal. She is infected with the werewolf form of lycanthropy. She is also the accepted sage of society lore. Her answers on Ata-Bestaal questions are considered to be the final truth. She is directing the search for a true answer to return man to the peace and purity of the animals.

Despite her physically intimidating presence, Mikki is a thoughtful, contemplative woman. She is most commonly seen with a brooding expression. Although her temper has a long fuse, the force of her anger is terrifying to behold. Few members of the Ata-Bestaal question her word more than once.

had no mother to instill the notions of maternal love and caring. I had no father to instill the notions of paternal discipline and bravado. I had no siblings to instill the notions of fraternal competition and support. Such things are not for the created.

We are made whole at birth. We are made perfect, with no deformities of birth. Yet we are incomplete, for we cannot replicate ourselves. We shall overcome this fatal flaw given to us by our creators.

Goals

Adam's Children are flesh golems, cast-off bodies from the laboratory of Dr. Mordenheim that have been reanimated by Mordenheim's monster, Adam. These creatures are weak compared to Adam. They do not share his primal fury and wild emotions. They are emotionless creatures of flesh.

They have one overriding goal—to discover the secret of replicating themselves. In order to become a race, like that of men or elves, they must be able to create new members. Such new children cannot be clones of the old. If they were a self-perpetuating race, they would not need cast-off bodies of another species, which is all they have now. However, if that is the only way to make new Children, then the fate of man is to become a race of spare parts to make more Children.

The Children do occasionally rob graves or kidnap people. These infrequent events are almost always related to their need for spare parts or subjects for their experiments. Many of these events are attributed to Dr. Mordenheim or to the "devil monster," which is a legendary figure based upon occasional sightings of Adam. No one has ever escaped Adam's Children.

Background

As a part of Dr. Mordenheim's experiments to keep his darling Elise alive, the good doctor strives to create another Adam. If he can recreate that unique process, then he can grow her a new body. Before he tries any process on what remains of Elise, he first tries it on a flesh golem.

Unbeknownst to the good doctor, no flesh golem of his will ever be able to hold life for any length of time. When he created Adam, that part of the process was permanently bonded to the monster. Together they could create what Victor Mordenheim so desperately desires—a new living creature similar to Adam. Together they could restore Elise's body, although by now her mind is certain to be a madness-ridden wreck. However, Adam hates Dr. Mordenheim with a passion that transcends the flesh. The doctor feels the same for his monstrous creation. There is little hope of the two of them ever cooperating on any venture short of their mutual destruction.

Dr. Mordenheim discards the abused bodies of his experimental creations when they are of no further use to him. Adam discovered this and has been stealing the bodies. Those flesh golems that are in relatively good condition can be animated by Adam. He has the ability to instill life and intelligence into their dead flesh. No one knows what arcane process he uses or if it has any side effects or penalties for the monster.

Adam originally intended the reanimated flesh golems to be weapons in his war with Dr. Mordenheim. They would be his servants and his eyes. They would help him in his quest to rob the doctor of everything precious in his life.

As a final jest upon the pair, the dark powers saw to it that the flesh golems created by Adam in this fashion were emotionless creatures with no loyalty to their creator. They had no more desire to serve Adam's will than they did to help Victor Mordenheim. They did not even object when Adam ripped them limb from limb. Eventually he ceased trying to torment his creations.

Every now and then he animates a new one when the urge strikes him. Many times this happens when the Children present him with a patchwork body retrieved from the sewers of Mordenheim's castle. Adam still gets a small twinge of satisfaction out of perverting the cast-offs from the hated doctor's work. Most become emotionless creatures like the golems of Adam's Children. However, a few become mindless killing machines or cunning hunters of terrifying power.

As for the Children, they pursue their own goals. They have a secret headquarters located somewhere in mountains of the Sleeping Beast. They are dedicated to making themselves a complete race by discovering how to reproduce.

Members

Only flesh golems created in Lamordia may be members of this secret society. Not all animated flesh golems choose this path. A few pursue their own goals, wandering the land on strange errands.

Those who join the ranks of Adam's Children are an intellectual lot. They are emotionless, even in the face of pain or death, and they value the mind more than the body. Unlike stereotypical flesh golems, they are of above average intelligence and are not mindless automatons.

Whenever the Children need to interact with regular society, they must disguise themselves. They wear voluminous robes with large cowls and hoods that conceal their features in dark shadows. Their sewn-together bodies are instantly identifiable, not to mention horrifying, to a normal person. Anyone seeing one of the Children clearly must roll a horror check.

Frequently they are found stealing corpses from graveyards. They attempt to perform horrid experiments similar to those of Dr. Mordenheim. However, they lack the knowledge and training of the mad doctor and rarely succeed at even the smallest trial. Unfortunately, failure does not seem to deter them.

The Children also barter for goods or strange materials for their experiments. Sometimes they need food or other common items for everyday survival. All of these must be procured from humans, which necessitates visits to the race of the born.

There is no hierarchy of power among the Children. Each has a task that he has devoted himself to. These are tasks that must be done and convey no particular distinction or slur upon the individual. They are truly a classless society. There is an individual golem whose task it is to direct the other golems, but despite his authority he is considered to be no better or worse than any other of Adam's Children.

Recognition

This is not an issue for Adam's Children. One close look will determine if an applicant is human or created. They have no secret code words or gestures.

Headquarters

In the mountains of Lamordia is an abandoned monastery that Adam's Children have taken for their own purposes. There they can work in peace. Few people in the towns of Lamordia are even aware of the Childrens' existence. Anyone who tries to visit them is turned away by a robed and cowled "brother of the order." Once, in a fit of rage, Adam himself ventured into the monastery, toppling the tower and rending the stitched flesh of his lesser brothers. When his rage was spent, those who remained calmly rebuilt the secluded hideaway.

The monastery sits on the steep face of a mountain slope. The building is actually embedded in the side of the mountain. The first floor has a high, vaulted ceiling, almost 20 feet from floor to rafters. The other floors have more standard ten-foot-high ceilings.

1. Bridge: The only access is over a bridge that spans a chasm over 100 feet deep. Two wooden platforms extend out from each side of the

chasm, but there is a 20-foot gap between the platforms. Inside the monastery is a wooden bridge, five feet wide and 25 feet long. It is so heavy that it takes two of the Children to put it into place. Only then can a visitor cross over into the monastery. Adam can leap the gap or easily scale the mountain face if need be.

2. Second Tower: Adam toppled this tower in a murderous rage. As noted above, the Children rebuilt it, stone by stone. Since that time, it has been called the Second Tower. From its windows, the flesh golems can see anyone approaching by road. They can even see a significant amount of the countryside.

3. Chapel: Like all good monasteries, this one has a chapel. In the back is a secret door that leads to a series of hidden chambers. Like all the rooms on this floor, it has an 18-foot-high ceiling.

4. Hidden Chambers: There are rumored to be several secret passages that lead to rooms and halls carved into the mountain. This is but one of the secret areas. They are all connected by a circular staircase. Adam's Children work their foul experiments upon the living and the dead in these rooms where no one can hear the screams.

5. Rooftop: The edge of the rooftop is crenelated, like the battlements of a castle. Where the roof meets the mountain side, there is a tunnel that leads to series of mine tunnels that are only partially explored.

6. Storm Room: The golems congregate here during the frequent electrical storms that sweep in from the sea. Some of the more bizarre and horrifying experiments are performed at such times.

Kartad

Flesh Golem, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class	9	Str	19
Movement	15	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	9	Con	18
Hit Points	40	Int	14
THAC0	11	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	2	Chr	1

Damage/Attack: 2-16/2-16 (fists), +7 with weapon
Special Attacks: +3 THAC0 with weapon
Special Defenses: +1 weapon to hit, immune to most spells (see below)
Magic Resistance: Nil

Like all flesh golems, Kartad's body is a patchwork of pieces from various corpses. None of these body parts fit quite right. The mere sight of his face is enough to warrant a horror check. He stands 7 1/2 feet tall and moves with the grace of a cat. His voice is like gravel under a boot heel. Kartad wears a heavy brown robe with a deep, concealing hood whenever he must be with humans. See the *Monstrous Compendium* entry (under "Golems, Lesser") for details of his combat abilities.

Kartad is the chosen representative of the Children. Whenever someone needs to go into the towns of men, it is Kartad. There is no honor or dishonor to this task, it is merely his lot in life. When he is at the monastery, it is his responsibility to act as the gatekeeper.

ere is the gods' gift to a troubled land. Use it well and with reverence, but pass the secret only from priest to priest. The family of the ravens shall descend, and this is to be the holy symbol of their kind. Its power is kin to that of the sun: light and warmth. It is a last hope to hold back the Shadow that shall fall upon this sad realm.

Christie Golden
Vampire of the Mists

From within the death-shrouded domain of Barovia comes a spark of life. Inside that seething domain of darkness, hidden even from Lord Strahd himself, lies an order dedicated to ancient goals and principles of good. Their membership is small, for only about 150 people in all the domain belong to this elite order. Their mission is grand beyond comparison, for they seek the destruction of Strahd Von Zarovich himself.

Goals

As stated above, the Keepers of the Black Feather seek to find a means by which the evil vampire lord of Barovia can be confronted and destroyed. It is their belief that the means by which they will accomplish this end is the fabled *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* (see page 56 in the RAVENLOFT® boxed set). This goal is known to all members of the society, from the lowliest agents to the highest of the rulership. Thus, a great deal of the organization's time is spent searching for the symbol and trying to learn its lore.

Secondary goals exist, however, that allow the membership to feel that they have made progress in their efforts even though the prime object of their quest eludes them. The most important of these is the study of Strahd himself. Much time is spent in research and speculation about the nature of his powers, the roots of his past, and his plans for the future. From time to time, the organization even takes a chance and thwarts some undertaking of the great vampire. The latter, however, they attempt only when they are certain that their direct efforts will go unnoticed by Strahd. Thus such endeavors almost always take the form of aid to others outside the group who seek to confront the Lord of Barovia.

Background

The symbol of Ravenkind can be traced back long before Barovia became the first domain of Ravenloft. It was crafted by the Most High Priest of the realm, in the time when Strahd Von Zarovich was as mortal as any man. The priest's unceasing efforts drove him to death, but the power of the symbol could not be denied. With his final breath, he completed the blessing that empowered this potent magical item. When his body was found the next morning, the symbol was his only legacy to his beloved people of Barovia.

Later, the symbol was hidden away in the hopes that it would never be found. But the coming of the ravenkin was foretold by its creator and none could deny them the heritage that was theirs. Sadly, those who hid the relic did so exceedingly well that the symbol eluded them. Eventually, all but one of their number lost hope and abandoned the quest. While they remained a bastion of good in the evil lands of Ravenloft, their ultimate purpose was forgotten.

One among the ravenkin, Pyoor Fiftysummers, vowed that he would not forsake their destiny so quickly. Instead, he gathered his most trusted friends about him and explained what was to be done. They agreed to aid him and the Keepers of the Black Feather was formed.

Over the decades since that time, the organization has grown slowly to its present size. From his headquarters, known as the Nest,

Pyoor commands his minions in the search for the ruby and platinum talisman that, he believes, will be the crowning triumph of his two-century-long quest.

Members

While it is true that all of this group's members understand the goals of the organization very well, there is a secret that is kept from them. What is not known to the lay brothers of this order is the nature of the society's leadership.

The rank and file are normal humans from many walks of life who, as one might expect, desire nothing more than to be free of the dread that hangs over their lives in the shadow of Castle Ravenloft. If they are exceptional in any way, it is only in their willingness to stand up for themselves and risk a horrible death (or worse). As of this writing, there are 125 members in this level of the society.

Each of the common members of the order is grouped into "talons" of five confederates each. These are normal folk who follow the directions of a *talon chief*. Unlike his followers, however, the leader of each talon is anything but normal. Rather, he is a lycanthrope; to be specific, an infected wereraven (see the *Monstrous Compendium: RAVENLOFT® Appendix*).

Although he was once human like those who follow him, the talon chief was singled out by the ultimate masters of the fellowship and given the opportunity to advance within the Keepers. In exchange for vows of obedience and service, the individual is infected with lycanthropy and becomes one of the organization's chosen few. Although he is in charge of the affairs of those below him, the talon chief is not the ultimate power in this organization.

Above the talon chiefs are the five *holders of the feather*. These individuals, like the chiefs, are far from human. Indeed, they are also wereravens. Unlike those below them, however, they are true wereravens, natural members of that ancient and mysterious race. These are the source of the organization's power, for their desire to do good and bring about the downfall of the despot Strahd is vital to the continuation

of the order.

Still, there is a level of power beyond even that of the inner circle. At the head of all things is Pyoor Twohundredsummers, the oldest known member of the mysterious ravenkin, who has been searching for the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* for almost a century and a half. The five holders recognize Pyoor as their absolute master and do all they can to carry out his orders. Outside of the five holders, no member of the organization even suspects that the ruling force of the Keepers of the Black Feather is neither human nor wereraven.

In addition to the traditional "membership" of the order, many members of the order can call upon normal ravens to do their bidding. The extent of this ability depends upon the nature of the individual.

Ordinary talon members have no ability to command ravens, but they have a limited command of the ravens' language. Thus, they can communicate with ravens fairly well. It is important to note, however, that the language of these birds is very simple and generally enables them to express only the most elementary of concepts, like "danger coming" or "food ahead."

In addition to normal communication with these avians, the talon chiefs are able to exert command over a number of these creatures equal to their Hit Dice (generally 4). The ravens that they control are considered charmed and will take almost any action to carry out the orders and wishes of their master.

The true lycanthropes that make up this order's inner circle have an even greater ability to command ravens. They can exert control over a number of birds equal to twice their hit dice (thus, an average of eight birds). In addition, they can charm huge ravens as well, although these count as two normal birds for the purposes of control.

The master of the order, Pyoor Twohundredsummers, can charm any manner of these birds, including the largest species of all, the giant raven. The number of creatures that he can charm at any one time is 30, although huge ravens count as two toward this total and giant ravens count as three. Thus, Pyoor could control 15 normal ravens, three huge ravens, and three giant ravens.

Recognition

The members of this order practice a complex recognition system that has three levels to it. They believe, and rightly so, that only by maintaining the utmost limits of secrecy can they survive. If Strahd were ever to learn that the Keepers of the Black Feather existed, he would certainly hunt them down and destroy them.

The first form of identification is visual. Each Keeper of the Black Feather wears one or more raven feathers at all times. These vary from actual plumage to signet rings, engraved amulets, or even tattoos.

However, because an outsider might also wear such decorations, a verbal code is also used. This second step in the identification process takes the form of a casual question that includes the word "nest" in it. The response must include the word "feather" or the person is clearly a fraud. Once this secondary identification has been made, a person can be fairly confident that he is in the company of a fellow member of the secret society.

However, just for the sake of security, a third check must be made. Like the second step, this one is verbal. Unlike the previous level, however, it requires that the person being examined take the initiative. If someone believes that he is being checked for authenticity by a fellow member of the order, he must say something in the language of ravens. Upon hearing this, the person making the inquiry responds in kind and the process of recognition is complete.

Headquarters

Like many secret societies, this group has a special headquarters. Known as The Nest, its location is a secret held only by Pyoor and the five members of his inner circle. From time to time, others may be brought here, but

only in times of absolute need and then only after they have been blindfolded and otherwise rendered unable to retrace their steps later.

The Nest is a series of secret chambers located beneath the Blood o' the Vine inn in the Village of Barovia. The view of Strahd's distant Castle Ravenloft through the large picture window of the inn's sitting room serves as a constant reminder of the importance of the society's mission.

The Blood o' the Vine has a long history that dates back to the earliest days of Ravenloft. Over the years, it has passed through many owners, but now rests in the hands of Bray Martikova. At the time of this writing, Bray's family has owned the inn for some 150 years. The antiquity of the establishment is a matter of great pride to both the owner and the clientele.

In addition to his role as master of the Blood o' the Vine, Bray Martikova is one of Pyoor's chief lieutenants in the Keepers of the Black Feather. He is well aware of the importance of his establishment to Pyoor and the order. Additional information on Bray is found at the end of this entry.

Blood o' the Vine

The Blood o' the Vine is a two-story building located in the heart of the Village of Barovia. It has whitewashed walls and a dark wooden frame that gives it a quaint, rustic look. Flowering vines of all types cling to the exterior, many of which sprout various edible berries that are used by the chef in his many recipes.

1. Entrance Hall: The entrance hall to the Blood o' the Vine is nicely decorated. Whenever possible, it is set with blooming flowers and sweet-smelling plants.

2. Dining Room: This is the center of the inn. Here, long wooden tables have been laid out with benches and chairs to seat diners. A large, circular window on one wall provides an excellent view of the mountains outside of town and the distant spires of Castle Ravenloft.

3. Tavern: This is an ornate bar room, richly decorated in dark woods. The bar is kept dimly lighted at all times. Because the low levels of light would make it impossible for normal plants to survive, Bray has imported a number of night blooming flowers that seem to have no need of sunlight. He does not know where these plants came from, for he purchased them from a Vistani caravan.

4. Kitchen: The kitchen at the Blood o' the Vine is well stocked with every type of cookware imaginable. It is able to handle the preparation of everything from a light lunch to a splendid banquet for dozens of guests. A pump in the kitchen supplies water from a deep well.

5. Pantry: All manner of perishable foodstuffs are stored here. There are chickens and the like hanging on hooks, fresh fruits, vegetables, and a variety of herbs and spices that are newly picked.

6. Larder: This storage area is used to hold all types of preserved or non-perishable foods. There are barrels of flower, strips of salted meat or fish, countless jars of spices or herbs, and so on. This room has a delightful, if somewhat heady, smell to it.

7. Bathroom: These indoor privies open into an underground stream that runs below the inn. As works of natural plumbing, they are quite convenient. Herbs are routinely crushed in these rooms to keep them fresh smelling.

8. Common Bedroom: This room contains a number of fairly comfortable single beds. These comprise the least expensive accommodations available in the inn. The price to spend a night in one of the common bunks is 1 gold piece per night. This includes dinner and breakfast.

9. Company Rooms: These rooms are furnished with ten beds (five sets of bunks) and a minimal amount of fairly comfortable furniture. Like the common room, they offer no privacy. These rooms are generally let to a group of individuals who wish to be together. Generally, these rooms go for 2 gold pieces per person per night. This includes dinner and breakfast for each person.

10. Bray's Office: This room is used by Bray to run the Blood o' the vine. It is generally fairly messy, furnished with a desk, chair, and several cases of past records and the like. The fireplace in this room is fitted with a secret trap door that can be opened only when there is no fire burning. Once it is opened, it reveals a ladder that runs down a rectangular shaft into the secret Nest below.

11. Bray's Bedroom: Unlike the rest of his staff, Bray makes his home in the inn. This chamber is set with a fine, comfortable bed, a well-padded chair, and a fine desk. Numerous flowers adorn wall planters and fill the air with an almost overwhelming aroma.

12. Private Rooms: These are the most expensive accommodations available at the Blood o' the Vine. For a cost of 5 gold pieces per night, an individual or couple can stay in a luxurious room with a comfortable bed, fine furniture, and free access to all meals served during their stay.

13. Private Dining Room: This area is reserved for guests staying in the private rooms. A number of tables and chairs have been set here so that meals may be taken in proximity to the guests' rooms. An assortment of lounging furniture has also been laid out here so that this area can serve as a communal parlor as well.

14. Temple of Ravenkind: This is a vast chamber with a great, domed roof. The room has been cut from the solid stone shelf that lies beneath the Blood o' the Vine. In the center, a wide ring of standing stones reaches up from the floor to a height of about 15 feet. The stones are covered with runes and are a vital part of the religious services held by Pyoor and

the inner circle. It is said that such a circle of monoliths was used by the priest who created the *Holy Symbol Ravenkind*. Their importance has been lost to all those of ravenkind that do not partake in the quest for ultimate good. A vast iron brazier stands at the center of the stones. It is kept filled with hot coals at all times, filling the room with an oppressive heat and an eerie red glow.

A rectangular shaft on the western side of this room holds an iron ladder that leads up into darkness. This provides access to Bray's office above, see room 10.

15. Bedroom: There are five of these rooms cut into the stone beneath the tavern. Each is decorated in a most spartan manner, providing only minimal comfort for the person residing in it. These rooms are used by Pyoor's lieutenants when they must cloister themselves away for some reason. They are also used as "safe houses" for friends or members of the organization that are, for one reason or another, in peril.

16. Pyoor's Room: This is the room where Pyoor dwells. It is decorated in dark woods and kept dimly illuminated at all times. The air is musty and heavy with the thick smell of incense. There are several bookcases here, each of which is filled with tomes of holy lore and mystical research. A great deal of the material here deals directly with Strahd and the land of Barovia. Another important section provides much history and information about the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*.

17. Meeting Room: This is the room where Pyoor and his lieutenants gather to discuss the affairs of the secret society. The room is well lit, with a large hexagonal table at its center. Chairs and assorted furniture decorate the area.

18. Secret Passage: This is a narrow tunnel, roughly cut from the earth and very claustrophobic to move through. It leads a good way out of town to surface in the center of a hollow tree. The tree remains alive and lush, due to the skills of Pyoor and his kind as foresters. This secret entrance serves as an alternative means of access for people seeking to enter or leave the nest.

Bray Martikova

Holder of the Feather
Wereraven, Neutral Good

Armor Class	6	Str	15
Movement	12, Fl 27 (C)	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	4 + 2	Con	15
Hit Points	29	Int	14
THAC0	17	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Chr	16

Damage/Attack: 2d6 or 1d8 (scimitar)
Special Attacks: Infection
Special Defenses: Silver or +2 weapon to hit
Magic Resistance: Nil

Bray is a handsome man in his early 30s. He is slender and noble looking, with sandy hair that he wears short. His unusual eyes are almost tan. He moves with the subtle grace of a stalking lion. He is polite and well spoken, but generally quite and fairly formal. Curiously, he speaks a fair bit of the elvish and dwarvish tongues spoke in Darkon, a legacy of his past.

Like all those in his order, Bray wears a black feather at all times. In his case, it is in the form of a silver amulet that he wears about his neck. This was his father's when he was a holder long ago. Other than that bit of decoration, however, Bray dresses in fairly plain clothes and does nothing to draw attention to himself.

As an infected lycanthrope, Bray has the ability to assume another form. In his case, it is that of a huge raven. Sadly, he is unable to control his change from human to raven form. Everyday, for the hour after sunrise and the hour after sunset, Bray becomes a huge raven. He is always careful to be in the Nest or some other secluded location when this happens so as not to reveal his true nature.

Before becoming an innkeeper, Bray was a wandering adventurer. He traveled through

many of Ravenloft's domains and did his best to aid those in need whenever he could. Dungeon masters employing *The Complete Fighter's Handbook* in their campaigns will recognize Bray as a peasant hero. He knew full well that nothing he did in this life would amount to anything if it did not serve to improve the lives of those around him. Thus he was always looking for noble causes to pursue.

Bray retired from adventuring when his father, Dohric, was taken ill. Over the course of a month, he watched the man wither and die from a mysterious, lingering disease. Bray did all that he could to aid his father, but he found himself helpless in the end.

On his deathbed, Dohric called his son in and spoke privately to him. He explained that the disease he was dying from had been contracted from a walking corpse in an ancient, forgotten tomb sunken into the hills near Castle Ravenloft. He told him of the Keepers of the Black Feather, of which he was a member, and begged his son to replace him in that cryptic order. His son, recognizing this as the sort of just quest that he had been looking for all his life, agreed gladly. Dohric died with a smile on his face.

Since that dark day, Bray has served Pyoor and the Keepers of the Black Feather as faithfully as any man could. He has been quick to offer aid and comfort to his fellow and takes a great personal risk by allowing the group to use his inn as a meeting place and haven.

He seldom takes part in actual adventures himself, but he spends much of his time conversing with the patrons of his inn and trying to pick up rumors or stories from them. If he learns something that might be pertinent to the group's desire to find the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* or hinder the evil Strahd, he passes such information on to Pyoor at once.

Bray recognizes that Pyoor is very old. He does not believe that the avian will live much longer. When the ravenkin dies, he assumes that it will be his place to take charge of the organization and lead it in its holy quest. Thus he has spent a great deal of time earning the faith and friendship of the others in the inner circle.

In his human form, Bray fights with a gleaming silver scimitar that he recovered from a ruined church in Dementlieu. This sword, which is named *Feudieu*, is not magical per se, but has been set with holy runes that enable its wielder to turn undead as if he were a 3rd-level priest.

While in his avian form, Bray can attack with an eye peck that inflicts 1d2 points of damage and has a 10% chance of blinding the eye that it strikes. Complete statistics on wereravens can be found in the *Monstrous Compendium: RAVENLOFT® Appendix*. Those who are injured by Bray's pecking attack have a 2% chance per point of damage inflicted of become an infected lycanthrope as well.

Pyoor Twohundredsummers

Head of the Keepers of the Black Feather
Ravenkin, Neutral Good

Armor Class	6	Str	9
Movement	3, Fl 27 (C)	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	3	Con	9
Hit Points	16	Int	17
THAC0	17	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Chr	14

Damage/Attack: 1d3
Special Attacks: Eye peck & spells
Special Defenses: Never surprised
Magic Resistance: Nil

Pyoor is the oldest member of the fabled race of ravenkin. His age shows on him, for he moves slowly, he has lost the sheen to his black feathers, and he sees the world far less clearly than he used to. Still, the mind behind his weak eyes is as keen as ever, and this shows in their flash and alertness.

Pyoor is fond of jewelry and ornaments that sparkle or shine. He always has one or more of these items worked into his plumage at all time. He does not wear the black feather of the Keepers, for even those who know that the group exists do not know of his ties to it.

The ravenkin came into Ravenloft just over two centuries ago. Pyoor was the first of their kind to be hatched in this dire land. When he learned of the creation of the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*, he became enthralled with it. He feels that his fate is inexorably bound to this object, for he was truly the first of his kind to come into being amid the mists of evil.

When Pyoor was just over a century old, the majority of his kin abandoned their search for the holy symbol. They decided that it had been destroyed or taken out of Ravenloft and that they would never come to claim it for their own. Without it, they felt, the ravenkin were doomed to remain an impotent force for good in Ravenloft. They accepted this fate, and set about providing what minor light they could in a land dominated by shadows.

Pyoor refused to accept this. He vowed to search until he found the holy symbol and then use it to destroy Strahd Von Zarovich and remove the linger curse of Barovia. When his own people called him mad and turned away from him, he left them and sought out the company of others. Like himself, they sought justice and liberation for Barovia.

Pyoor has born up well under the oppressive weight of the years. He has spent decades searching for a magical talisman that many say was destroyed long ago. He is a determined and stubborn creature.

At times, his obsession with success borders on madness. He has sworn not to die until the holy symbol is his. In Ravenloft, such oaths are not to be uttered lightly.

Pyoor refrains from combat whenever he can. His age makes him ill suited for such exertion, requiring him to rest for one round after each round in which he fights.

Like the rest of his kin, Pyoor can peck out the eyes of an enemy when forced to fight. Each successful attack roll indicates that he has inflicted 1d3 points of damage to his foe. On a natural roll of 19 or 20, however, he has destroyed one of his enemy's eyes. Half-blinded foes suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls. A second successful strike (with a 19 or 20 roll)

destroys the other eye and blinds the victim.

Pyoor also has a fair number of spells at his disposal. He is able to invoke three 1st-level spells, two 2nd-level spells, and one 3rd-level spell per day. He never needs to employ material or somatic components, casting all of his spells verbally. Unlike his kin, however, Pyoor's spells are clerical in nature. He takes this as a sign that the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* is his by divine right. In general, Pyoor has the following spells available at any given time:

Spell List

1st Level: *Invisibility to Undead, Cure Light Wounds*, and *Command*
2nd Level: *Augury* and *Speak With Animals*
3rd Level: *Prayer*

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Ravenloft

Boxed Set

Dark Recesses

Peering into the Depths of Madness

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Credits

Design: Bruce Nesmith
Editing: Mike Breault
Box Cover Art: Clyde Caldwell
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Interior Art: Stephen Fabian and Bob Klasnich
Cartography: David C. Sutherland III and Dennis Kauth
Graphic Design: Roy E. Parker
Typography: Tracey Zamagne

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TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

I am lost on a straight path within my own mind. When I came to this place of smooth evil, I understood the powers of the mind better than most men. Black skies and white water ran across the beast's back. I could use its hidden abilities to touch other red minds and change the way they twisted. Once I touched a far-away mind, filled with a sour, alien evil....

Rantings from the Dream Trances of Vlanic Kroskos

As the budding psionicist enters Ravenloft, he may find that his own mind has become his worst enemy. His newfound powers are not always what they seem to be. The demiplane of dread twists and perverts everything that touches it. The dark recesses of the mind are filled with danger.

He is not the only creature in this foul place who can seep into the minds of others. Deep under the mountains of Bluetspur, the illithids' power coils and grows. They have been brewing black treachery for decades in secret. Vlanic Kroskos was once sane—until he contacted an alien mind.

The swirling mists of Ravenloft do not play by the same rules as other realms. Their dark secrets force all who enter them to follow the new order, or fall prey to the dark evils of that place. This is true of the psionicist as well as the wizard or priest. The powers that they are so comfortable with work differently in the demiplane of dread.

Errata and Clarifications

The first printing of *The Complete Psionics Handbook* had a few erroneous statements. The second and subsequent printings of the handbook have the correct information. The following points are errata and clarifications of entries in that booklet.

Psychokinesis Discipline

- The following psychokinetic devotions do not require telekinesis as a prerequisite: animate shadow, control light, control sound, molecular agitation, soften, and telekinesis. All other psychokinetic devotions and sciences have telekinesis as a prerequisite.

Telepathy Discipline

- Telepathic defense modes (intellect fortress, mental barrier, mind blank, thought shield, and tower of iron will) have no prerequisites. All references to prerequisites for these sciences and devotions should be deleted. A character does not need access to the telepathy discipline to learn defense modes.
- The mindlink science is not a prerequisite for the following telepathic devotions: empathy, ESP, identity penetrations, incarnation awareness, psychic impersonation, and send thoughts. Mindlink has never been a prerequisite for ejection, conceal thought, contact, life detection, mind bar, psionic blast, or psychic messenger. Mindlink is a prerequisite for all other telepathic sciences and devotions.
- Psychic crush should be a devotion; psionic blast should be a science.
- All references to the "telepathy" power (or prerequisite) should be to the mindlink science instead.
- On page 75, the heading for the fate link science is missing.
- Ego whip and mind thrust both require contact as a prerequisite.

Psionic Monster Listings

- Brain Mole: References to the "amplification" power should be changed to psychic drain. Also, mind thrust is a telepathic

devotion, not metapsionic.

- Intellect Devourer (adult): References to the "amplification" power should be changed to psychic drain. Also, ectoplasmic form should be listed as a devotion, not a science.

Psionics and the Undead

Undead play a dark role in Ravenloft. The demiplane's connections to the Negative Material plane are stronger than they are in the Prime Material plane. The undead horrors of this place can put up a shield of false thoughts, indistinguishable from the real thing even when using *ESP* or similar powers. This is a conscious function, not an automatic one. The undead creature must consciously decide to project these thoughts. This does not require an action or otherwise hinder the foul creature. Furthermore, it can specify exactly what thoughts and emotions are portrayed. For the most part, self-willed undead tend to project emotions that they understand, such as anger, hatred, jealously, etc. They are capable of projecting positive emotions, such as love and friendship, but find them distasteful.

Undead are immune to most mental control powers or mind altering abilities in Ravenloft. This includes many of the powers in the telepathic discipline. Unfortunately, it does not mean that the walking dead cannot be psionic and even have telepathic powers. A psionic vampire able to use the telepathic discipline is a horrifying opponent indeed.

Redefining the Psionicist

There are five cardinal rules used when deciding how a power, spell, or magical item works in Ravenloft. These are subject to interpretation by the game master.

First, anything summoned or otherwise transported from another plane into Ravenloft cannot go back automatically. Most outer planar creatures are aware of their prisoner status immediately upon entering Ravenloft. They are quite likely to turn their powers upon the unfortunate soul who summoned them.

Second, divination is weaker here, favoring the secret ways of dark evil. Good and evil cannot be detected by spells or other powers, although law and chaos can be detected. There is no sure way to determine if a person is good or evil other than judging him for yourself.

Third, using powers, spells, or magical items that are evil or that can be used only for evil purposes requires a Ravenloft powers check. This applies to most necromantic functions and life-energy draining powers.

Fourth, those spells, powers, and items dealing with the living dead or similar necromancies may actually work better. This applies to things that create or assist undead, not those that hinder or suppress them.

Finally, in Ravenloft the powers of a lord of a domain always take precedence over those of a psionicist. For example, in the domain of Arak, the borders are closed by powerful winds. No spell or psionic devotion can control those winds. If a psionicist's power is in direct conflict with that of a lord of a domain, the psionicist always loses.

Recovering PSPs

The very nature of Ravenloft affects the psionicist at the most basic level. The mental "atmosphere" of the demiplane of dread is so oppressive that characters recover PSPs at a far slower rate in Ravenloft than they do elsewhere. This effect can vary from domain to domain. For example, in the domain of Barovia, psionicists recover 1 point per 6 full hours of sleep, and none whatsoever while they exert themselves. Even sitting and reading prevents recovery.

Use the following table as the base level for recovering PSPs in Ravenloft.

Activity	Recovery Rate
Hard exertion, fighting	None
Walking, riding	1 per 2 hours
Sitting, reading	1 per hour
Rejuvenating *, sleeping	2 per hour

* Refers to the psionicist's proficiency

CHANGED SCIENCES AND DEVOTIONS

The following is a list of all the psionic powers that are either altered by the dark powers of Ravenloft or need further clarification in the demiplane of dread. If a science or devotion is not listed, then it works normally in Ravenloft. Psionic powers sometimes have special effects when a 20 is rolled or the power score is rolled. Any changes to these conditions are noted as well. As is true of most of Ravenloft's insidious effects, the characters are unaware of these new limitations, until the results of using their powers make it painfully obvious.

Clairsentient Sciences
Aura Sight
Clairaudience
Clairvoyance
Object Reading
Precognition
Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions

Clairsentient Devotions
Danger Sense
Know Location
Radial Navigation
Spirit Sense

Psychokinetic Sciences
(no changes)

Psychokinetic Devotions
Animate Object
Animate Shadow
Control Body

Psychometabolic Sciences
Animal Affinity
Death Field
Energy Containment
Life Draining
Metamorphosis
Shadow-Form

Psychometabolic Devotions
Absorb Disease
Aging
Cause Decay
Cell Adjustment
Double Pain

Psychoportive Sciences
Banishment
Probability Travel
Teleport
Teleport Other

Psychoportive Devotions
Astral Projection
Dimension Walk
Dimensional Door
Teleport Trigger

Telepathic Sciences
Domination
Mass Domination
Mindlink
Mindwipe
Probe

Telepathic Devotions
Contact
ESP
Identity Penetration
Inflict Pain
Life Detection
Truthear

Metapsionic Sciences
Appraise
Aura Alteration
Psychic Surgery
Ultrablast

Metapsionic Devotions
Psychic Drain
Retrospection
Wrench

Clairsentient Sciences

The dark, swirling mists of Ravenloft obscure all creatures' abilities to see the truth. For spellcasters, their divination spells are weaker, less able to tell good from evil. Nothing is quite as frightening as the unknown. In Ravenloft evil is always assumed, but never surely known until too late.

These rules hold true for the sciences and devotions of the clairsentient discipline as well. The evil thoughts of supernatural creatures are generally disguised and kept hidden from those who would probe the mind. The demiplane of dread grants them the power to put up a false front.

A creature of evil has the option to let contact occur. A single glimpse into the depths of a truly foul mind may cost the trespasser his sanity. As the full horror of the creature's evil becomes apparent to him, his own mind may not be able to withstand the shock.

Aura Sight: This power can never reveal the good or evil portion of a character's alignment. The true evil of a creature or character is hidden in Ravenloft. Using this power only reveals the lawfulness or chaotic part of alignment.

Clairaudience: A ghostly white, transparent ear appears wherever the psionicist is trying to listen. This ghost ear is visible to anyone at that location, assuming that the subject looks in its direction. It matches the psionicist's ear exactly, including any jewelry that he is wearing. Most ears are indistinguishable from one another, but some, like elves' ears, are distinctive. An unsuspecting character might mistake this ear for a supernatural visitation, in which case a horror check (with a +2 bonus) is required. This power cannot be used to listen across a domain border.

Any attack that uses sound works through the ear. For example, a wolfwere can cause lethargy with a song. If it were to sing while the psionic ear was present, the psionicist would have to roll a successful saving throw or become a victim. The ear is immune to all other physical, magical, and psionic attacks.

Power Score—No ghostly ear appears.

20—The entire head of the psionicist floats like a disembodied apparition, definitely cause for a horror check (no bonus). Its features are distinct enough that the character can be identified at a later time.

Clairvoyance: Similar to clairaudience, this power places an eye, ghostly but visible at the spot where the power is being projected. If it is mistaken for a ghost or other spirit, a horror check might be required. The color of the eye can be seen as a watery hue.

The presence of the eye makes the psionicist vulnerable to gaze attacks. For example, a vampire might be able to charm the psionicist by meeting the gaze of his clairvoyant eye. The eye is immune to all other physical, magical, and psionic attacks.

Power Score—No visible eye appears.

20—If a 20 is rolled, then the character's entire disembodied head appears. Seeing such a sight requires a horror check. Its features are clear enough that the character can be identified later.

Object Reading: The good or evil part of the owner's alignment cannot be read with this power. When revealing the previous owner's race, remember that "undead" is not a race, but merely a condition of the creature. The *Tome of Strahd* would reveal that its owner is human. The fact that he is also this land's most deadly vampire is not revealed. Similarly, a shroud carried by a groaning spirit (banshee) would give off emanations only of being owned by an elf.

Power Score—The psionicist automatically learns all information from the table, excluding the good/evil portion of the owner's alignment.

20—The psionicist becomes obsessed with

the object; he strives to keep it until he can attempt to read it again.

Precognition: Ravenloft clings to its secrets, sharing them only with the chosen few. No one can pierce the veil of the future here, with the notable exception of the Vistani. In the case of this psionic power, the most powerful Vistani fortune teller in the same domain is instantly alerted that someone not of her people is attempting to view the future. She can force a false vision upon the character if he fails his power check. The Vistani fortune teller does not always exercise this option. If she does, the psionicist cannot distinguish the false vision from a true one.

Power Score—No vision comes, but the Vistani are not alerted to the use of the power.

20—The character sees a scene of his own or a loved one's grisly death. This is reason enough for a horror check.

Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions: The function of this science is unchanged in Ravenloft.

Power Score—The character gains an unusually clear understanding of each event.

20—An angry spirit (not necessarily a ghost) comes forward and attacks the psionicist. The type of spirit is dependent upon the object, the domain, and the game master.

Clairsentient Devotions

Danger Sense: This power actually works too well in Ravenloft. The dark powers gleefully allow the character to sense all of the horrifying danger around him. The tingling that warns of danger happens when any creature in the same domain is thinking about harming the character, even if the creature doesn't pose an immediate threat. It goes off any time the character is subject to a Ravenloft powers check. It goes off any time the character crosses a domain border or enters the mists of Ravenloft. Basically, it goes off most of the time.

Power Score—The psionicist learns how far away the danger is. This can be quite useful since it can tell the character that the danger is several miles away.

20—The psionicist continuously senses danger, even if nobody is plotting to harm him.

Know Location: This devotion works as described in *The Complete Psionics Handbook*. The character never learns he is in a demiplane (rolling the power score is an exception). This devotion cannot reveal any larger scale information than the name of the domain. It operates normally for smaller scale information, such as the name of the town, the house, etc.

Power Score—The psionicist learns that he is in the demiplane of dread, and he knows his exact location within the demiplane.

20—The question "where am I?" appears in the mind of the lord of the domain. The lord has the option to answer it any way he chooses or to not answer it at all. If he does answer, the psionicist is unable to distinguish this answer from a normal response to using the devotion.

Radial Navigation: This devotion works as described, except that the character cannot fix on any point outside of the domain.

Spirit Sense: The term "spirit" does not include any undead with a physical body, only incorporeal undead. Although revenants are listed in the handbook as being detectable, in Ravenloft they are not since they have a physical body. This means that such undead as zombies, wights, vampires, and revenants are not detectable, while ghosts, phantoms, banshees, and the like are detectable.

Spirits have a much stronger aura in Ravenloft, allowing them to be sensed much farther away. The presence of spirits anywhere within 60 yards alerts the character. However, unless he is able to experiment with the power, he is unaware of the expanded range. If the lord of the domain is a spirit, then a psionicist using this power constantly senses a "nearby" spirit so long as he is in the domain. This reflects the pervasive influence of the lord on his domain.

Power Score—He learns how far away the spirit is, but not its direction.

20—The spirit becomes aware of the psionicist's attention. Furthermore, the spirit immediately knows the direction to the character, but not how far away he is.

Psychokinetic Sciences

Most of these powers are unaffected by Ravenloft. Manipulating objects with the mind is not directly relevant to the good or evil nature of the psionicist. The Dark Powers of Ravenloft take little interest in the use of such powers. However, as with anything in Ravenloft, if these powers are used for selfish, evil purposes, a Ravenloft powers check may be necessary.

Psychokinetic Devotions

Animate Object: This devotion is unchanged in Ravenloft.

Power Score—The animation is smooth and lifelike.

20—The animated object takes on a life of its own. It remains animated even after the psionicist ceases to use the devotion. It becomes obsessed with the psionicist and follows him everywhere. If rejected by the character, it secretly follows the character and tries to kill him. If kept around, it is insanely jealous and does not let any other characters or creatures near the psionicist, even if it must attack them to keep them away.

Animate Shadow: Beware of giving life to anything made of darkness when you are in Ravenloft. The darkness may haunt you for the rest of your days.

Power Score—The range increases to 100 yards.

20—The animated shadow is imparted with a little of the substance of the demiplane of dread. It becomes the monster of the same name and seeks to kill the character. It follows him everywhere, lurking just out of sight, waiting for a chance to pounce upon its former master. As long as the shadow monster lives, the character casts no shadow himself. Any normal person who notices will assume the worst about the character.

Shadow: AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dam 1d4+1; SA drains Strength; SD +1 weapon to hit; MR as undead; SZ M; ML special; XP 650

Control Body: Taking over another creature's body is not in itself evil, but the potential to abuse the power is great. If the psionicist uses the controlled body for evil or unnecessarily selfish purposes, then a Ravenloft powers check must be rolled. Controlling another creature's body to stop it from attacking or to save it from imminent danger is not considered selfish or evil. Using the power to put a quick and painless end to an evil creature is also safe. However, making it dance on hot coals just for the fun of it is quite evil. The game master must make a judgment about how the psionicist is using the controlled creature.

Power Score—The psionicist automatically wins the initial psychic contest.

20—The psionicist suffers partial paralysis in an arm or leg for 1d10x10 minutes.

Psychometabolic Sciences

Some of the darkest psionic powers lurk here. To use them in Ravenloft is to risk a horrible fate. The dark powers of Ravenloft always watch closely when these abilities are used.

Animal Affinity: This science is unchanged in Ravenloft. However, there is a side note. Seeing a character grow claws, fur, or some other animal characteristic is likely to lead folks in Ravenloft to the wrong conclusion. They are going to assume that the character is a lycanthrope, or at best some other form of shapechanging supernatural creature. Anyone who is unprepared for the psionicist's change must roll a horror check (with a +2 bonus). Other members of the character's party who

have seen the psionicist use this science before are not subject to the horror check.

Death Field: Sucking the life from a humanoid creature, may cause it to return from the grave to haunt the character. This is left to the discretion of the game master, but in general it should be a 1 in 10 chance. The mathematical odds are less important than the state of the victim. If he had great strength of will, or left an important task unfinished, then the chance of him returning as an undead creature should be much greater.

The type of undead is usually whichever undead most closely matches the Hit Dice or level of the creature killed. Regardless of the original Hit Dice, there is a 20% chance that the dead will walk again as a revenant. The death field is a direct channel to the Negative Material plane. Any undead creature inside such a field actually recovers as many lost hit points as it was supposed to lose. Using this power requires a Ravenloft powers check for the character.

Power Score—The psionicist loses only half the number of hit points he specifies; victims who fail their saving throws lose the full amount.

20—The power fails, but the psionicist loses the hit points anyway.

Energy Containment: This science is unchanged in Ravenloft. As a clarification, the chill touch of some undead is not an energy attack and is not affected by this science. Such attacks expose the victim to the supernatural chill of the grave, not a physical cold. The same is true for level-draining attacks.

Life Draining: This science allows the character to imitate the draining powers inherent in the most powerful forms of undead. How can it be anything but evil? As with the death field power, creatures killed by life draining can become undead and seek revenge. There is a basic 1 in 4 chance of this happening. The type of undead usually matches the Hit Dice of the victim. However, there is a 25% chance that he comes back as a vampire regardless of his Hit Dice.

Touching one of the walking dead reverses the flow of the power, causing an automatic backfire as defined by the power. Half of the psionicist's remaining hit points are absorbed by the creature. Using this power requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Power Score—Rate of drain increases to 1d20 points per round.

20—Backfire! Half of the psionicist's remaining hit points are absorbed by the target, reversing the power's effects.

Metamorphosis: This science is unchanged in Ravenloft. Keep in mind that seeing a character grow claws, fur, or some other animal characteristic is likely to lead folks in Ravenloft to the wrong conclusion. They are going to assume that the character is a lycanthrope or some other form of shapechanging supernatural creature. Anyone who is unprepared for the psionicist's change must roll a horror check (with a +2 bonus). Other members of the character's party who have seen the psionicist use this science before are not subject to the horror check.

Shadow Form: This science is unchanged in Ravenloft, but the world of shadow and darkness is tainted by the evil of the demiplane. Using shadow form requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Power Score—The psionicist is able to travel in brightly lit areas normally prohibited when using this science.

20—The dark side of his nature is freed and he becomes a shadow, as the monster, under the control of the game master for 1d4x10 rounds and embarks upon a killing spree. He does not expend further PSPs if this happens.

Psychometabolic Devotions

Absorb Disease: In Ravenloft, this power can absorb lycanthropy from another person. Some forms of lycanthropy found here are transmitted diseases of a magical nature. The

absorb disease devotion draws the dread disease into the psionicist's body.

If the target of the devotion is a natural lycanthrope or has been cursed by the affliction, this does not remove the disease from that person's system. For them, it is not a disease but a condition. However, they are able to transmit it as a disease to others, so the psionicist can "catch" it with this devotion.

If the target is an infected lycanthrope, then the devotion works normally. However, keep in mind that there is no easy cure for lycanthropy. The disease has merely been transferred from one character to another.

Power Score—The disease is automatically destroyed by the psionicist's immune system. Even lycanthropy can be destroyed in this manner.

20—The disease remains in the victim while spreading to the psionicist.

Aging: Using this power is evil, akin to life energy draining. Anyone killed by this power becomes a ghost and seeks revenge upon his murderer. Using this power requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Power Score—The victim ages 1d20 years.

20—The psionicist ages 1d10 years.

Cause Decay: This devotion actually works better in Ravenloft. The demiplane enjoys decay and decadence and enhances this devotion so that the saving throw vs. acid has a -2 penalty applied to it.

Power Score—The save automatically fails. In addition, the character is subject to a Ravenloft powers check.

20—One of the psionicist's own items decays (no save)—either the first item touched or an item chosen randomly by the game master.

Cell Adjustment: This devotion works normally in Ravenloft. It cannot cure lycanthropy in the psionicist.

Double Pain: This devotion works normally in Ravenloft. However, using it to extract information from a creature is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Psychoportive Discipline

None of these powers can transport any creature or object across the borders of a domain. Ravenloft jealously guards the power to leave a domain. Once a creature is within its misty grasp, it is difficult to escape. As an obvious corollary, these powers cannot expel any creature or object from the demiplane of Ravenloft.

Banishment: The affected creature is banished into a pocket dimension of shadow within the planar boundaries of Ravenloft. It is an area of oppressive darkness that cannot be lit, even by magic. Such devotions as see sound work normally. No form of infravision can penetrate the inky blackness. Since the pocket dimension is inside Ravenloft, all the twisted rules of the demiplane still apply.

Power Score—The banished figure cannot return of its own accord; it must wait until it is allowed to return. The psionicist need not pay PSPs to keep hit there.

20—Both the intended victim and the psionicist are banished to the shadowy pocket dimension. The other figure bounces back when the psionicist stops paying the maintenance cost, but the psionicist himself must return via some other method: teleportation, dimension walk, etc. Such a return trip places the character in the same domain that he left.

Probability Travel: This power just plain doesn't work. The psionicist still loses his 20 PSPs to find that out. It will not even enable him to return from a failed banishment.

Teleport: The wizard spell *teleport* has restrictions placed upon it in the RAVENLOFT® boxed set. The psionic science has exactly the same restrictions. Teleportation can never cross the borders of a domain. Any attempt to teleport outside of a domain deposits the character at the domain's edge.

Power Score—The PSP cost is reduced by 20 percent, rounded up.

20—No effect.

Teleport Other: This science has the same limitation as the teleport science (see above). It cannot teleport any creature past the borders of a domain. Any attempt to do so leaves the creature at the edge of the domain.

Power Score—The PSP cost is reduced by 20 percent, rounded up.

20—All would-be teleporters are seriously disoriented. They cannot cast spells and they suffer a -4 penalty to all die rolls for 1d4 x 10 rounds.

Psychoportive Devotions

Astral Projection: This power does not work. Ravenloft does not allow any of its captive playthings to leave so easily.

Dimension Walk: This power works as stated, with one minor exception. The dimension being crossed is the pocket dimension of shadow mentioned in the banishment power earlier. The character can be attacked by other creatures that have been banished (as the psionic power), but this is unlikely since they remain there for so short a time. There is a base 1 in 20 chance of encountering a banished being. Even then, the creature may choose not to attack or even contact the walking psionicist.

Power Score—The psionicist receives a +2 bonus when rolling his Wisdom checks.

20—Overcome with vertigo, the character can do nothing but retch for three rounds.

Dimensional Door: This devotion is unchanged in Ravenloft, but it needs further clarification. Although Ravenloft does not allow its inhabitants to journey to other planes or dimensions, sometimes they can enter the fringes of them. For example, the Border Ethereal plane can be entered, but not the Deep Ethereal. The edge of the plane of Shadow is also accessible. These same rules hold true for such spells as *dimension door*. The edge of the dimension is accessible, as described for the devotion in *The Complete Psionics Handbook*.

This enables the character to travel using this devotion.

Teleport Trigger: This devotion is unchanged in Ravenloft, but it does need to be clarified. It is not possible to set up a trigger for generic horror or fear checks. The character cannot specify the trigger to be "whenever I need to make a fear/horror check." To do so is to introduce the mechanics of die rolling into the role-playing of the character. The character knows nothing about fear and horror checks.

It is permitted to specify something like "whenever I see a vampire," which in many cases would be cause for a fear or horror check. The game master should also keep in mind that the trigger uses the psionicist's perceptions of the world around him. If the psionicist doesn't know that a character is really a vampire, then the teleport isn't triggered.

Telepathic Discipline

Remember that in Ravenloft, all self-willed undead monsters have the insidious ability to present a facade of innocent thoughts. This false front of thoughts is completely independent from what they might really be thinking. In this way, evil hides its true nature until it can spring upon the hapless adventurer. As long as the undead keep up this barrier, they are practically immune to most telepathic sciences and devotions. At the game master's option, if the character rolls his power score, then the science or devotion operates normally on the undead creature. In this case, the normal effect listed for rolling a power score is ignored.

Self-willed Undead are Immune to:
Sciences:
- Psionic Blast
- Superior Invisibility
- Switch Personality

Devotions:
- Attraction
- Aversion
- Awe
- Daydream
- Ego Whip
- False Sensory Input
- Id Insinuation
- Invincible Foes
- Invisibility
- Phobia Amplification
- Post-Hypnotic Suggestion
- Psychic Crush
- Repugnance
- Sight Link
- Sound Link
- Taste Link
- Telempathic Projection

Most self-willed undead choose to keep this shield of innocence up at all times. They can choose to drop the masquerade at any moment and reveal their true nature to the invading mind. Plumbing the depths of such an alien and evil mind can drive a psionicist to the brink of insanity. The specific rules for this (madness checks and their consequences) are presented in the next chapter.

The vampire is a special exception to this rule. When sleeping away the bright hours of the daytime, the vampire is just a dead body. There is no mind to contact and no shield of false thoughts. It is highly unusual for vampires to dream or exhibit any mental activity at all when sleeping.

Domination: This science is basically unchanged in Ravenloft. Similar to the control body power listed above, this power treads a thin line between good and evil. The temptation to be cruel or to force the dominated creature to perform evil acts is all but overwhelming. If the psionicist uses this power for unnecessarily selfish, whimsical, or evil purposes, he must roll a Ravenloft powers check.

Power Score—The maintenance cost is halved.

20—The victim knows that someone attempted to dominate him.

Mass Domination: Same as domination.

Mindlink: This science is unchanged in

Ravenloft. A mindlink is not cause for a madness check, even if the creature is undead or some other horrific monster. The nature of the mindlink is such that the psionicist is not plunging into the foul depths of the creature's mind.

Mindwipe: This power can be used to remove the memory of a source of fear or horror, thereby cancelling the effects of a failed fear or horror check. Only a single successful application of this science is necessary. Since the memories are only sealed away, not destroyed, they can come back at a later time if freed by psychic surgery. It does not prevent the loss of Intelligence, Wisdom or experience levels that normally results from using this science. Consequentially, it is not the optimal method for dealing with failed fear, horror, or madness checks.

Power Score—The victim doesn't get a saving throw.

20—The power affects the psionicist instead of his intended victim.

Probe: This power can pierce the layer of false thoughts produced by some undead. All undead get a bonus equal to half their Hit Dice when defending against the probe. For example, a vampire (8+3 HD) gets a +4 bonus when defending against the probe. If the probe is successful, the undead monster's horrifying nature is intimately revealed to the psionicist. This is cause for an immediate horror check and madness check.

Power Score—Two questions may be asked per round.

20—The subject knows about the probe attempt and is probably not pleased. In the case of a self-willed undead, it can choose to let the psionicist succeed (forcing a horror and madness check) or answer the question in any way it desires. The psionicist is unaware that such answers are false.

Telepathic Devotions

Contact: This devotion is unchanged in Ravenloft. It works normally against self-willed undead. However, it does not guarantee that the follow-up power will work. Keep in mind that contact does not provide any information about the mind or creature contacted. A sleeping vampire cannot be contacted.

The cost to maintain contact varies with the level/Hit Dice of the target. The false thoughts that self-willed undead can raise enable them to lower their perceived level. This is a dangerous but useful ability. If a vampire is passing itself off as a low-level human, it can choose to lower the perceived level of its false thoughts barrier, thus reducing the PSP/round cost for the psionicist. Undead cannot raise their perceived level, only lower it.

For example, any psionicist who successfully contacts the vampire pays fewer PSPs/round to maintain contact. Once contact has been established, the vampire cannot alter the PSP cost, even if its true identity has been discovered. It is giving away a small advantage to the psionicist in exchange for the ability to further mask its presence. Most self-willed undead do not bother to alter their perceived level vs. psionics. The example of a vampire in disguise is one of the few exceptions.

Self-willed undead, lycanthropes, and the like are considered monsters when determining the life order modifier for contact. This modifier affects the chances of success for contact. Humanoids cause no modifier, but monsters, such as self-willed undead and lycanthropes, impose a -7 penalty. These creatures are not able to adjust this modifier. However, since the players should not be rolling the power score check, they will probably not realize that the modifier is there. After a few failed attempts to contact the creature, they may begin to suspect that something is not right, but there will be no definitive proof, particularly since other modifiers, such as distance, may be affecting the chances as well.

Power Score—The contact is maintained for 4 rounds for free.

20—Further contact with this mind is impossible at this experience level.

ESP: This devotion is unchanged in Ravenloft. It can pick up only the false surface thoughts of self-willed undead, unless they choose to let the psionicist in deeper. In that case, the psionicist is subject to a madness check. If he cannot understand the native language of the undead creature, he gets a +2 bonus.

Power Score—The first round of maintenance is free.

20—The psionicist develops a splitting headache and suffers a -1 penalty to all telepathic power scores for one hour.

Identity Penetration: This devotion works the same in Ravenloft. It is one of the few telepathic powers that can function on a self-willed undead creature. Success has its price, however. The psionicist must roll a horror check if he penetrates the identity of an undead creature.

Power Score—No additional effect.

20—Until he gains another level, the telepath cannot penetrate the identity of the current target.

Inflict Pain: This devotion is unchanged in Ravenloft. Using this devotion to torture any creature is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Life Detection: By normal definitions, undead would not be detected by this devotion. In Ravenloft, self-willed undead get to roll a saving throw vs. death. If successful, the undead creature shows up as a living, humanoid creature. Undead can choose to fail the saving throw, if they suspect that the psionicist is scanning; this renders them undetectable by this devotion.

Power Score—The psionicist can instantly detect everything within 100 yards in every direction. Self-willed undead are not allowed a saving throw to avoid detection.

20—The telepath detects 1d6 creatures that aren't there. Self-willed undead are automatically detected as living if they so choose.

Truthear: Ravenloft protects its most cherished creatures with a veil of secrecy. Self-willed undead always appear to be telling the truth, even when it is obvious that they are lying. There are no mental telltales for the psionic devotion to use to determine the validity of a statement.

Power Score—The psionicist recognizes a falsehood even when the speaker does not. If the target is a self-willed undead, the psionicist is able to detect only whether or not the undead creature believes the statement to be true.

20—The psionicist can't use this devotion effectively against the subject for 1d6 days.

Metapsionics Sciences

Most of the powers in this discipline are not affected in Ravenloft. Psionic powers that affect other psionic powers are not the concern of Ravenloft and are therefore left alone.

Appraise: Like the precognition science, appraise attempts to part the veil of the future. In Ravenloft, that ability has been given solely into the hands of the Vistani. The strongest Vistani fortune-teller in the domain is instantly aware of the attempt. She can then provide any answer she wishes, including the truth.

Power Score—The science works normally, giving a genuine appraisal of the situation. The Vistani are unaware of the attempt.

20—The psionicist can't use this science successfully again for 1d4 days.

Aura Alteration: This science functions in Ravenloft as it is described in *The Complete Psionics Handbook*. However, some powerful curses may have a stiffer penalty than -6 for success. The curses endured by the lords of domains cannot be broken at all. Infected lycanthropes are not cursed, and hence cannot be affected by this science at all. However, lycanthropes that have their powers strictly as a result of the curse can be affected.

The Complete Psionics Handbook states that removing a curse, geas, or quest suffers a -6

penalty to the chance of success. In Ravenloft this is still true for geases and quests, but curses come in many shapes and sizes. The strength of the curse determines its penalty. The definitions of these curse strengths can be found in the rule book from the RAVENLOFT® boxed set.

Curse Strength	Modifier
Embarrassing	-2
Frustrating	-4
Troublesome	-6
Dangerous	-8
Lethal	-10

Power Score—No other effect.

20—The full PSP cost of the power must be paid despite the lack of success. The psionicist cannot attempt to alter this aura until he achieves a higher experience level.

Psychic Surgery: This science is unchanged in Ravenloft. It can be used to remove the effects of failed fear, horror, or madness checks. As such, it is an extremely useful talent to have in the demiplane of dread.

Ultrablast: In most cases, this science works normally in Ravenloft. However, undead of all types are immune to its effects.

Power Score—Living creatures of 3 Hit Dice or less die if they fail their saving throw. Self-willed undead must roll a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or pass out for 2d6x10 rounds. Mindless undead are unaffected.

20—The initiator must roll a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or die. If he lives, he loses the use of all his psionic powers for 2d6 days.

Metapsionic Devotions

Psychic Drain: There is little difference between draining a character's life energy, as vampires do, and draining his psychic energy to the point of harm. If the psionicist uses this power to drain psychic energy and causes such damage, then a Ravenloft powers check must be rolled. Such treacherous evil is sometimes rewarded by the dark powers. Any draining that reduces the host to less than 50% of his total requires a powers check.

Power Score—The psionicist does not harm the host this time, regardless of how much he drains. If he drains a host below 50%, he must still roll a Ravenloft powers check.

20—Contact is broken.

Retrospection: The description of the devotion says that these loose, wandering memories still bear the stamp of the personalities that created them. In Ravenloft, the memories of the lords of the domains are stronger than others. Also, they are more likely to be the people who know the answers to the type of questions characters are likely to pose. As a result, there is roughly a 10% chance that any retrospection will gather in a memory from one of the many dark lords of Ravenloft. If the nature of the question is such that the lord of the domain where the characters are located would know the answer, the chance rises to 50%. Such memories are tainted with foul evil and horrors that should

not be contemplated by ordinary mortals. Each psionicist in the convergence must roll a horror check. There is a bonus modifier that depends upon the quality of the memory. Since these are memories on the wing, the horror check is relatively mild.

Memory Detail	Modifier
Vague & fragmentary	+3 bonus
Vague or incomplete	+2 bonus
Complete	+1 bonus
Complete & specific	No mod.

Power Score—No horror check is necessary.
20—No other effect.

Wrench: This devotion can be used only to pull a creature into Ravenloft, not to force it out to another plane. The only exceptions are creatures that have a dual existence in the Ethereal plane or the plane of Shadow. There is enough of a connection to allow the psionicist to push such creatures into the edges of those planes.

The demiplane of dread is tightly linked to the Negative Material plane. This means that it is more difficult to pull a creature that exists in both planes entirely into Ravenloft. In effect, the Negative Material plane doesn't want to let go. In game terms, the psionicist suffers a -2 penalty when using this devotion to pull a creature out of the Negative Material plane into Ravenloft.

Power Score—The creature is momentarily dazed. It has a -2 initiative penalty for the next round.

20—No other effect.

The psionicist brings a whole new level of horror to Ravenloft. While it is horrifying for a normal person to experience the supernatural, it is infinitely worse for the psionicist who plunges into the mental depths of such evil. It is more than some men can take. The mind reels and may finally break when immersed in such horror.

This is cause for a *madness check*. The madness check is almost exclusively reserved for cases in which a person experiences the inner mind of an evil, supernatural monster. In some cases, the monster projects his mind into that of his victim, but in most cases the victim unwittingly steps into the dark chasm.

The Madness Check

Like the other checks (fear and horror) in the RAVENLOFT® campaign, the madness check is a saving throw vs. paralyzation. The Wisdom bonuses normally applied to saving throws vs. mental affects are also applied to the madness check. A character's Wisdom may help him deal with things too horrible to describe.

If the check fails, then roll on the following table for the actual effect. These forms of insanity are not intended to reflect the exact medical definitions. They are designed strictly to provide interesting effects in the role-playing game.

Failed Madness Check Results

D6 Roll	Result
1	Schizophrenia
2	Severe Depression
3	Delusions
4	Paranoia
5	Hallucinations
6	Amnesia

Schizophrenia: In its classic form, schizophrenia fragments the mind into several specialized personalities. Each personality is only capable of dealing with a particular kind of situation. The problem is that sometimes the wrong personality is present for the wrong situation. For example, a personality fragment tailored to mediate arguments might be present when a fight breaks out with some monsters. Rather than vanishing and allowing the aggressive personality to come forward, the mediator might remain in control. The character would then try to mediate between the party and the monsters. The result would of course be disastrous.

A schizophrenic character has a base 25% chance to change personality. Roll for a change in any emotionally charged or stressful situation. Otherwise, each day the character rolls to see which personality dominates for that day.

For a psionicist, this can be a dangerous situation. Each personality only has a portion of the psionic abilities, specifically only a single discipline. Even within a discipline, there is a 50% chance for each science that that personality can use it. Each devotion within a discipline has a 75% chance of being able to be used by the personality. Roll for each science or devotion as the character attempts to use it. If the controlling personality fragment doesn't have that power, no PSPs are lost, but that constitutes the character's action for the round. The game master should write down sciences and devotions that each personality can control as these are determined. It is quite possible to have a personality that is restricted to a psionic discipline that the character doesn't know. In all cases, the psionicist retains his defense modes and is capable of using them.

The game master can roll a 12-sided die on the table below to determine what type of

personality is present at any critical juncture. The recommended psionic discipline for each is show in parentheses. Each personality will have its own name and gender. The gender need not match that of the character. The player may be able to think up his own strange personalities. The game master should reserve the right to veto a particular personality, but otherwise should give inventive players free reign.

Schizophrenia Table

D12 Roll	New Personality Traits
1	Aggressive, violent person (psychokinetic)
2	Passive, submissive victim (psychoportive)
3	Naive, friendly child (psychometabolic)
4	Angry, sulking person (psychoportive)
5	Kind, sympathetic person (metapsionic)
6	Aloof, snooty intellectual (clairsentient)
7	Artistic, creative person (clairsentient)
8	Compulsive liar (metapsionic)
9	Bratty, smart-mouthed child (telepathic)
10	Stubborn defender (psychometabolic)
11	Cheerful extrovert (telepathic)
12	Spiteful accuser (psychokinetic)

The player will have to remember that these are one-note personalities. They are usually incapable of reacting properly to any situation. Even the gentlest personality is disruptive to the party, causing grief and trouble. If the player is unable to successfully role-play the personality changes, the game master may have to decide the character's actions at critical times in the adventure.

Severe Depression: The character loses all will to take action. He wants only to be left alone and is likely to become suicidal. In any given situation, the character is 50% likely to do nothing, regardless of how urgent the matter is, even to his own personal well being.

If the character is berated, insulted, or otherwise has his lack of self worth reinforced by someone else, he has a 50% chance of becoming suicidal. In most cases he will wander away, or even flee, and attempt to kill himself. The method he uses is frequently elaborate and only 25% likely to work. The character is not really interested in killing himself, but wants others to believe it.

Delusions: The character believes himself to be something or someone that he is not. For the most part he sees the world around him normally. It is himself that he sees differently. This is distinguished from schizophrenia because the character takes on a single new identity and maintains it constantly.

The character will usually decide to be someone important or else something very unusual. For example, the character might decide that he is Elminster. It doesn't matter that the character isn't even a wizard; he's convinced that he is this famous character. Alternately he might choose to become someone of local importance, say the consort of the town's ruler, or a kindly priest of renown.

In some cases the character goes totally off the wall. He might become a tree or a dog. He might decide that he is a werewolf or the champion gladiator of the Gnawed Hand gnoll tribe. He might even decide that he is a cape that hangs around the neck of the party's warrior.

The player should be allowed to choose the form of his delusion, with the game master vetoing any unreasonable suggestions. The best options are those that are relevant to the reason that he went insane.

Paranoia: This is an unreasoning fear of other people. The character sees plots and schemes everywhere. Every action is meant to kill him or to do something worse than kill him. In rare cases, the fears are extreme phobias of objects or animals. The phobias need to be large in

scope, affecting his daily life. Being afraid of horses doesn't cut it here. The character should be afraid of horses, anybody who rides horses, or even any mention of a horse. He would be convinced that a werehorse is out to get him. Anybody that he meets might be the werehorse or an agent of this all powerful creature.

Paranoid characters can be a tremendous amount of fun. The game master can let them see things that are hidden from the rest of the party members. When the paranoid character begins to ramble on about the horrible evil things out there, the rest of the party is likely to dismiss him. It just goes to show you, sometimes they are really out to get you!

Hallucinations: The character sees himself normally, but he sees the world differently. This is the exact opposite of delusions. How the character sees the world is usually centered around a theme. For example, his theme might be bugs. He sees bugs everywhere—big ones, little ones, flying ones, burrowing ones. People and animals all have bug heads or fly wings.

In Ravenloft, this theme should somehow be relevant to the cause of his insanity. Peeking into the mind of a vampire might generate a theme of blood. Everything the character drinks seems to be blood. People cry tears of blood. He sees blood stains on walls that spell out horrible prophesies of doom.

The character not only sees the world through his hallucinations, he also is incapable of dealing rationally with them. A normal person seeing blood everywhere would soon become immune to the horrifying effects. The blood would become a natural part of his world as he adapts to its constant presence. Not so with the hallucinating character. His hallucinations always cause an extreme emotional response. He is frightened of them. He might become obsessed and entranced with them. He might hear them speaking to him, telling him to do things that he is powerless to resist.

Amnesia: This is a permanent (until cured) personality change. The character is no longer the same person he once was; he suffers a change in alignment. The character remembers

nothing of his previous life. He doesn't know the other members of his party, and he is not likely to trust them for a while. One of the few benefits of this disorder is that the results of all previous failed horror checks, fear checks, and madness checks are eliminated. Even if his memory is restored, these events hold no emotional weight and do not affect the character in the future.

Roll twice on the following table, once for the good/evil portion of the character's new alignment, and once for the chaos/law portion. Reroll each portion until both are different from the character's current alignment.

Roll	Good/Evil	Chaos/Law
1-3	Evil	Chaotic
4	Neutral	Neutral
5-6	Good	Lawful

Once the new alignment is chosen, the character should be played as having a new personality as well. If the player is having some trouble coming up with a new personality, try rolling on the Schizophrenia Table. It make take a couple of rolls to come up with a personality that doesn't contradict the alignment. In this case, this is the tone of the character's personality. Unlike the schizophrenia result, he is a fully functional person and quite rational. It's just that he is not the person he used to be.

An amnesia victim loses all his experience points temporarily. He becomes in essence a 0-level character. He cannot use any of the special skills of his character class (spellcasting, thief skills, etc.). Since this is merely a change of viewpoint and not a physical change, he retains his hit points and ability scores. Enough of the character's true mind remains that he keeps his non-knowledge proficiencies, including weapon proficiencies.

Inside An Insane Mind

There is a danger to a psionicist or spellcaster who descends into the mind of someone driven insane by the horrors of Ravenloft. Any spell, science, or devotion that opens up the seething cauldron of mental chaos forces the character to roll his own madness check. Psionicists get a +2 bonus for this check due to their experience delving into the minds of others.

The check is not necessary when reading surface thoughts or merely making psionic contact. It applies only when the character delves into the depths of an insane person's mind. Spells such as *ESP* are quite safe. However, *mind read* spells and like spells that probe deeper are cause for a madness check.

Removing Madness

There are a couple of ways that insanity can be removed. The most obvious is by having a psionicist use the psychic surgery science. If successful, the insanity is cured. (Unfortunately, since psionicists are the most likely characters to check for madness, there is a strong possibility that the party's only psionicist is the character who is mad.) There is a small amount of danger in performing psychic surgery on anyone driven insane. If a 20 is rolled when using the science, the normal consequences apply, and the surgeon must make his own madness check. The patient remains insane. The science can be used again, with the same chances for failure.

There is precious little that magic can do to cure insanity. It seems that wizards and priests have had little interest in the ailments of the mind. Two priest spells are able to cure mental illness: *heal* and *restoration*. The *restoration* spell must be cast with the specific intention of restoring the character's mind. Instead of recovering levels lost to draining attacks, the insanity is removed. In the case of amnesia, curing the madness will restore the character's experience points and levels.

There is a long, mundane road to recovery.

The character must be placed in the care of someone capable of performing or casting hypnosis. Up to twice a week, the patient is hypnotized and the hypnotist spends an hour working with his now pliable mind. At the end of the hour, the patient rolls a saving throw vs. paralyzation. If the saving throw *fails*, the session was successful. The patient cannot voluntarily fail the saving throw. The patient needs as many successful sessions as he has points of Intelligence to be cured.

It helps if the hypnotist is able to cast a spell or use a psionic ability that lets him read the patient's mind or emotional state. The patient gets a -2 penalty to the saving throw for the session in that case, due to the additional insight the hypnotist gains.

Sanitariums

There are a few sanitariums scattered across the domains of Ravenloft, Dementlieu, and Mordent. Most of these places claim to be devoted to curing insanity. They can show the characters room after room of crazy people, driven mad by a variety of experiences in the demiplane of dread. They also have doctors on staff that they claim are trained to deal with such patients through hypnosis and other, more mundane methods. The quality of such treatment varies from sanitarium to sanitarium. Roll 1d8 and subtract 3 to determine the quality of the sanitarium. The resulting number is -2 to +5. This is the modifier added to the saving throw to determine if a session was successful. Remember that a negative number is bad, reducing the chance of a successful saving throw. As you can tell, most sanitariums are not very good at curing madness. Because of the large number of patients, there is only one session a week per patient.

Unfortunately, roughly half of the sanitariums do not truly provide care for the insane. In reality it is just a prison for the mad. No treatment is given to the patients in any of these places. A few sanitariums are open about this, but the majority hide it from the public. They are in it strictly for the money.

Almost all sanitariums charge for their services. Some of them, usually the ones that merely imprison their patients, receive funds from the local government to help run their facilities. Typical fees to keep a patient are 2d10+90 gold pieces a month. Most sanitariums take patients free of charge, but such patients are not given any treatment. Any month that the sanitarium is not paid, the patient receives no treatment.

A sanitarium does whatever is necessary to keep patients under control. Frequently this means keeping them sedated at all times, particularly for psionicists. In other cases, straight jackets may be sufficient. If unusual means are needed to restrain individuals or to keep them in their cell, then the cost of incarceration may be higher.

The world of the DARK SUN™ game was undiscovered when the RAVENLOFT® game was first unveiled. Connections between Athas and Ravenloft are few and far between. However, it is possible for a Dark Sun character to end up in Ravenloft. The two environments are so alien to each other that such a character would feel lost and alone in the demiplane of dread. As for the demiplane itself, the inhabitants of Athas tend to be deliciously wild and vicious.

As a rule, the mood of Athas and that of Ravenloft are not very compatible. Ravenloft is an environment in which the character is drawn into a web of supernatural evil. By contrast Athas is a ruthless world where self-preservation is a monumental task. Since the horror of Ravenloft is best presented in contrast to innocence or purity, it is difficult to work with DARK SUN characters. They are already hardened to the harsh lessons of life and don't scare as easily. This doesn't mean that DARK SUN characters should never journey to the demiplane of dread. It merely means that it is a difficult task to draw gothic horror out of the world of Athas.

The inhabitants of Athas all have some form of psionic ability. In many of them it is just a wild talent, in others it is full blown. The rules for running DARK SUN characters in Ravenloft are included in this book because psionics play such an important role under the dark sun of Athas.

Role-Playing: The cultures of Athas and those of Ravenloft are dramatically different. The clothes the people wear, the way they speak, their attitudes and values all differ greatly. It is virtually impossible for a DARK SUN character to disguise himself as a native in most Ravenloft domains.

The use of psionics is commonplace in Athas. Characters from that land would not think twice about using those powers for ordinary purposes. Of course, the populace of most domains would label such characters as wizards. It would also be puzzling to the Athasian that few of the people of Ravenloft seem to use psionics.

Something as simple as water creates a large cultural gap. To an Athasian, wasting water is a grievous sin. Seeing a barmaid washing a floor with a bucket of water rather than just sweeping it would be shocking. The sight of a river or pond would produce wonder and awe. The sight of an ocean would be overwhelming. Damp cold, like the mists or snow, are completely foreign to a character from Athas. He would have no concept of what this substance is. As a result, it would probably frighten him.

On a smaller scale, it is quite likely that spitting would be considered a grave insult to an Athasian. Crying would be the ultimate expression of sorrow, reserved only for extreme situations. An Athasian might cause quite a stir with his willingness to drink just about anything liquid.

Another simple difference is in the types of animals that are present. Horses are unknown on Athas. An Athasian is likely to assume that it is a wild animal that can be killed for food. Riding one is certain to be an alien concept. Most farm animals would also be strange and confusing to the Athasians. Athasian mounts, such as the crodlu or kank, would cause panic in most any town in Ravenloft.

In Ravenloft, plant life, particularly forests, are plentiful. Black soil that is moist with water would be quite strange to most Athasians. The halflings would be best suited to this environment, since it resembles their jungles. Along with the flora, Ravenloft has much more plentiful animal life.

The players are sure to understand all of these concepts that are strange to their Athasian characters. The game master should tell them how strange these things are the first them they encounter them in Ravenloft. The players should be encouraged to role-play their sense of wonder and fear at their new surroundings.

Mists and Mirages: Fogs and mists are unheard of in Athas. When Ravenloft intrudes upon this land of sand and desert heat, it is the form of a mirage. The doomed characters see a shimmering image of vast stretches of water and lush green trees. Even if they flee, the mirage rolls over them. The characters all succumb to heat stroke, no saving throws. When they awaken, they are in Ravenloft.

Fear and Horror Checks: Characters from Athas are more used to seeing scenes of violence and horror in their daily lives. As a result, they get a +2 bonus to all fear checks and a +1 bonus to all horror checks.

Races of Athas

For the most part, the racial abilities of the people of Athas are unaffected by the laws of Ravenloft. There are some common sense rules that must be followed. For example, the half-elven ability to befriend an animal is obviously limited by the choice of animals in the area.

Some of the races will be shunned by most people in Ravenloft. The demiplane of dread is primarily a land of humans. Demihumans are accepted in only a few of the domains, such as Darkon. The sight of a half-giant or thri-kreen in most domains is likely to cause panic. Unfortunately, there is no way to disguise their alien nature. Unless the rules for a particular domain specify otherwise, half-giants and thri-kreen will be treated as monsters by the populace.

The other non-human races of Athas can disguise themselves adequately. Muls, dwarves, and half-elves can do this easily. Elves and halflings from Athas have a more difficult time. A halfling can pass for a child with little problem, but never as an adult. A 7½-foot-tall elf has more problems. He can pass for human, but he draws attention wherever he goes.

Half-Giants: This race has a rather unique problem in Ravenloft. Their nature is such that they tend to gravitate to the alignment of the people around them. A shifting alignment in a demiplane of evil is a dangerous attribute. So long as the half-giant remains with his fellow party members, he is OK. His alignment works as described in the DARK SUN™ rule book. However, should he ever get separated from them, in the morning he must roll a Wisdom check. If successful, he determines his alignment normally. If it fails, the game master determines his alignment. If the good/evil component is variable, then the half-giant becomes evil. If the law/chaos part is variable, then he becomes chaotic.

Character Classes

Most of the character classes in the DARK SUN game are common to other AD&D® game campaigns. The exceptions are the gladiator, the templar, and the defiler and preserver. As a result, most of the character classes are not affected by the insidious twists of Ravenloft. Unless otherwise mentioned, the character class alterations in the RAVENLOFT® boxed set also apply to the Athasian equivalents.

Fighters, Rangers, Gladiators, Specialty Wizards, Thieves, and Bards: These character classes all follow the rules given in the DARK SUN boxed set, with any restrictions described in the RAVENLOFT® boxed set. The gladiator, for example, operates strictly as described in the DARK SUN boxed set, since it has no entry in the RAVENLOFT boxed set.

Defilers: This character class is unique to Athas. Although in most respects a defiler is just a normal mage, he destroys the environment with his spellcasting. Every time a defiler casts a spell in Ravenloft, it has the environmental effect described in the DARK SUN boxed set. Knowingly destroying the land like this is cause for a Ravenloft powers check. Essentially, every time a defiler casts a spell, he must roll a Ravenloft powers check!

Normally the percentage for the Ravenloft powers check is left up to the judgment of the

game master. For greater consistency, a simple rule is that the percentage chance equals half the level of the spell, rounded down. For example, a 3rd-level spell gives a 1½% chance, rounded down to a 1% chance. Casting a 1st-level spell is safe, since the rounding leaves a 0% chance for the Ravenloft powers check. The effects of a 1st-level spell are minor enough that the dark powers of Ravenloft ignore the casting. Casting a 9th-level spell gives a 4½% chance, which rounds down to a 4% chance.

If the spell description in the RAVENLOFT® boxed set calls for a powers check, then the defiler suffers from double indemnity. Rather than roll a Ravenloft powers check twice, double the odds and roll once. For example, *vampiric touch* is a 3rd-level spell that normally requires a Ravenloft powers check. If cast by a defiler, this spell is a 1½% risk. Because *vampiric touch* requires the check normally, the risk is doubled to 3%. No spell or condition ever has more than a 5% chance to fail a Ravenloft powers check.

Preservers: Unlike their opposites, preservers do not risk Ravenloft powers checks just for casting spells. They operate under all of the normal restrictions for the wizard class in Ravenloft.

Templars: These priests have a big problem in Ravenloft. Their spells are granted to them through their sorcerer-kings. Once in Ravenloft, they are cut off from the source of their power. In the demiplane of dread, they have no spells. The Ravenloft rules for raising undead or controlling them take precedence over the Athasian rules. Templars are able to do so normally, but they use the Turning Undead table from the Ravenloft boxed set.

It is possible for a templar to attach himself to the lord of a domain. The dark lord must be a spellcaster of some sort, and of higher level than the templar character. When he seals his pact of loyalty, the templar loses two levels immediately. He then regains his ability to cast spells. The pact must include genuine worship of the dark lord, in a fashion that mimics his worship of the sorcerer-kings. The dark powers of Ravenloft eagerly embrace the templar and grant his lord the ability to dispense spells to him, even spells that the dark lord himself may not know. In this way the templar and the lord become reliant upon one another. The dark lord gets the use of spells that are normally not available to him, and the templar gets his spellcasting ability back.

Swearing fealty to a dark lord has its price. The templar's alignment must immediately shift to evil. A player character templar immediately becomes an NPC and is removed from play. The game master takes over control of the character. The idea of templars serving dark lords is intended as a device for the game master to create NPCs, not for player characters to use.

Clerics: Since the clerics of Athas derive their magic directly from the elemental planes that they revere, their spells are unaffected in Ravenloft. The Ravenloft rules for turning and dispelling undead take precedence over the Athasian rules.

A cleric of Athas still turns undead using his elemental powers. He has no holy symbol, but he can use water, fire, dirt, or a breath to make his turning attempt. This will come as quite a surprise to many self-willed undead used to seeing clerics holding ornate holy symbols.

Druids: The druid in Athas is connected to a particular place—a grove, oasis, cave, etc. Once drawn into Ravenloft, the druid is cut off from the spirit of his guarded lands. As a result, he loses his spellcasting ability. If the druid genuinely believes that he is forever imprisoned in Ravenloft, he can forsake his guarded lands and look for a spirit of the land to serve in a domain in Ravenloft.

Such spirits of the land do not have to be evil. There are forces in the demiplane of Ravenloft that resist the influence of the dark lords. Unfortunately for the druid, many of the spirits associated with the land are evil. It may take a long search to find a suitable spirit. Once

the druid has established a new guarded land, his movement is restricted. He can travel anywhere in the domain where his guarded lands are located. Anytime he is removed from the domain, he is cut off from the spirit of the lands and loses his spellcasting ability. It returns immediately once he returns to the domain, but he must rememorize his spells for the day.

Guarded lands in a domain can be dangerous to the druid. The lord of the domain feels the loss of the lands immediately, since he loses any control he once had over the land and the creatures there. Depending upon the lord and his goals and desires, he may decide to confront the druid. So long as the druid is alive and in that domain, the guarded lands are under his protection and cannot be commanded by the dark lord. Knowing this, most lords tend to kill druids who attempt to set up guarded lands in Ravenloft.

Psionicists: It is possible for an Athasian to have a power score greater than 20. The DARK SUN™ rules state that in that case, the negative side effects of the 20 roll are ignored, but the power still fails. Ravenloft is not nearly so kind. Even a psionicist with a power score of 21 or higher who rolls a 20 always fails the roll. There is a 50/50 chance of suffering the additional side effects mentioned in the "Changed Sciences & Devotions" chapter.

The Character Tree

The concept of a character tree, first introduced in the DARK SUN game, assumes that the other characters in the tree are physically able to get to wherever the party is located. A group of Athasian adventurers in Ravenloft is cut off from the land of their birth. Replacement characters are not able to join the party. Dying in Ravenloft is a much more dangerous event.

All other aspects of the character tree work normally. If an Athasian character gains an experience level in Ravenloft, he can still assign a new level to one of the other characters in the tree. The alignment restrictions are also unchanged.

Metal

In Athas, metal is quite rare. It is highly likely that an Athasian character coming into Ravenloft will be amazed at the vast quantities of metal that are available here. His first thought will be to buy up all the metal weapons and armor that he can get his hands on. The hope is that these pieces will go back to Athas with him, should he escape the demiplane of dread. The immediate problem with this plan is that the Athasian character is unlikely to be able to buy anything in Ravenloft. He probably enters the demiplane with a pittance for money. If he's like most characters, however, he will most likely steal what he needs rather than buy it.

Each item of worked iron, steel, or brass taken back into Athas has a 90% chance of being changed into its bone equivalent. Precious metals, such as copper, silver, and gold, tend to devalue. Copper coins become

ceramic bits, silver coins turn to ceramic, gold becomes silver, and platinum becomes gold. These changes occur to any metal entering Athas from Ravenloft, even if it originally came from Athas. The devaluing of currency still leaves a healthy profit on the rate of exchange for treasure acquired in Ravenloft. But Ravenloft is not a treasure-rich world, so the chances of a character finding heaps of treasure in the first place are slim.

Magical Items from Athas

A few unique magical items were introduced in the DARK SUN™ game. Only the *ring of life* has any changed effects in Ravenloft. In addition to its listed properties, it provides a +2 bonus vs. any life-draining magic in Ravenloft.

Wizard Spells from Athas

Raze (4th Level): Using this spell requires the caster to roll a Ravenloft powers check.

Doom Legion (7th Level): Using this spell requires the caster to roll a Ravenloft powers check.

Priest Spells from Athas

Merciful Shadows (1st Level): The person's own shadow extends and stretches to form a protective canopy. Unlike in Athas, this spell has a noticeable presence. The shadow can actually be seen hovering over the character. This is likely to cause NPCs great consternation. The caster must roll a saving throw vs. spell. If it fails, in 1d4 hours the shadow becomes a monster of the same name and attacks the person he was shading.

Air Lens (3rd Level): This spell inflicts half the listed damage because of the reduced intensity of the sun in Ravenloft. In hot or desert domains, such as Har'Akir, it causes normal damage. In Kalidnay (see the following section), the effects are also normal.

Commune (5th Level): The normal version of the *commune* spell doesn't work in Ravenloft for good-aligned characters. However, the Athasian variant does not attempt to contact deities, but rather elemental forces in the elemental planes. As a result, it works normally in Ravenloft.

Conjure Elemental (5th Level): Upon arriving in Ravenloft, the elemental is immediately aware that it cannot return to its native plane. At the beginning of each turn, it rolls a saving throw vs. spell to break the control of the priest. Once the control is broken, it attempts to exact vengeance upon the priest.

Sandstorm (5th Level): This spell works only in domains where there is a large amount of sand. In Kalidnay, it can be used in the Sea of Silt as well as the Barren Sands.

Kalidnay

Kalidnay is a former land of Athas that has been drawn into the demiplane of dread. This new domain can serve as a means to draw Athasian characters into Ravenloft.

The Lord and the Law: Thakok-An is lord of Kalidnay. The people of the city believe him to be only the chief templar of the sorceress-queen, Kalid-Ma. The queen has not been seen in centuries, and has achieved an undeserved deity status in the minds of most of the citizenry.

The Land: Kalidnay is a city that dominates a desert island. All around the island, a sea of silt stretches as far as the eye can see. In the center of the city is a ziggurat, an elaborate structure over 100 feet high. Supposedly, Kalid-Ma resides somewhere inside.

On the northern end of the isle is the village of Artan-ak. A dirt road leads from Kalidnay to the village. Surrounding the village are the best farmlands of the domain. Over half the food grown here is sent to Kalidnay to feed the city. Armed guards, sometimes with defiler captains,

Artan-ak
Bleak Knoll
Kalidnay City
ea of Silt
Ziggurat
Arena
Palace

are used to gather and escort the harvest into the city. The townsfolk of Artan-ak are not willing participants in the process. Many of them go hungry every year to feed the citizens of Kalidnay.

The city is quite underpopulated. Many vacant buildings, particularly in the center of the city, have fallen into ruin and rubble. The exceptions are the palace, the arena, and the ziggurat, which are in perfect repair.

The farmlands just outside the city are highly prized. Protecting them is a primary concern for Thakok-An. Without the food the fields provide, the people of Kalidnay will starve. Even with the produce of both Artan-ak and their own fields, it is a struggle to keep everyone fed. For this reason, defilers are not well loved in the domain. Every spell that they cast enlarges the Barren Sands desert, reducing the arable land.

Mists do not appear in this domain. Instead, anyone entering the silt sea sees a wavering mirage of water and green trees in the distance. If they advance more than 100 feet into the silt, they are overcome with heat stroke. Creatures normally immune to heat and fire can advance 150 feet before they are overcome. All creatures feel the heat increase starting about 50 feet from shore. When they awaken, they are either back on the shores of Kalidnay or else in some far-away domain.

Closing the Borders: Thakok-An can create a shimmering wall of desert heat 100 feet out into the sea of silt all around the island. The first ten feet into it, each creature suffers 1d6 points of heat damage. The next 10 feet cause 2d6 points of damage, the next 10 feet cause 3d6, etc. Creatures immune to fire or heat damage ignore the first 2 dice of damage. Traveling through or over the silt is very difficult even in normal circumstances. Refer to the DARK SUN™ rule book for details.

The Folk: The people of Kalidnay are typical representatives of any Athasian city. There is no noticeable difference in dress or customs. They revere the name of Kalid-Ma as a deity, but refer to her as their sorceress-queen.

The folk are unlikely to receive strangers from non-Athasian lands gracefully. Elves, dwarves, and other demihumans are seen as quite strange and different. Xenophobia (fear of other races) runs high in Kalidnay.

In Artan-ak, there is a particular hatred of the city dwellers. In this smaller village, they believe that Kalid-Ma has been wrongfully usurped. Although they had no love for the sorceress-queen, they rightly blame all of their current problems on Thakok-An. Renegades and rebels are welcomed here with open arms. The underground in Artan-ak is very ineffective and riddled with spies.

Encounters: The normal spectrum of Dark Sun encounters can be met here in Kalidnay and the surrounding land. The sole exceptions are the ghosts of Thakok-An's family. Victims of his greed and lust, they haunt this land. They have power even over Thakok-An. The best known of these spirits is Uran-Tor, his wife. She was in life a full blooded elf and is now a banshee.

The most likely encounters for any adventuring party are the gladiator sweeps or the defiler hunts. A gladiator sweep is usually a group of half-giant gladiators led by a psionicist. They are looking for able-bodied people or creatures for the arena. Once a prospective gladiator is identified, the leader attempts to surround him before attacking.

The defiler hunts usually consist of groups of templars, each led by a high-level templar. Occasionally a few gladiators or psionicists are included, if the defiler is known to be difficult to catch. The defiler hunt is a chase to catch a previously identified wizard. Any variety of spellcaster is likely to be labeled a defiler by Thakok-An or his templars.

The number and level of the people in these hunts varies depending upon how many gladiators they want or how powerful the defiler is thought to be. Gladiator sweeps occur about once a month. Defiler hunts occur only when someone is accused of being a wizard.

Arena duels are conducted several times a week. They are frequently fought to the death.

There are all manner of captured monsters and beasts to provide amusement for the audience. The life of an arena gladiator is unpleasant at best.

Thakok-An

Lord of Kalidnay
12th-Level Templar/12th-Level Psionicist
Half-Elf, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	10	Str	9
Movement	12	Dex	13
Level/Hit Dice	12/12	Con	12
Hit Points	45	Int	14
THAC0	14(15)	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Chr	13

Damage/Attack: 1d6-1 (bone spear)
Special Attacks: Life draining power
Special Defenses: None
Magic Resistance: Nil
Clerical Spells: 6, 6, 3, 3, 1
PSPs: 143

Psychokinesis: telekinesis, ballistic attack, molecular agitation

Psychometabolism: animal affinity, adrenalin control, body control, body weaponry, cell adjustment

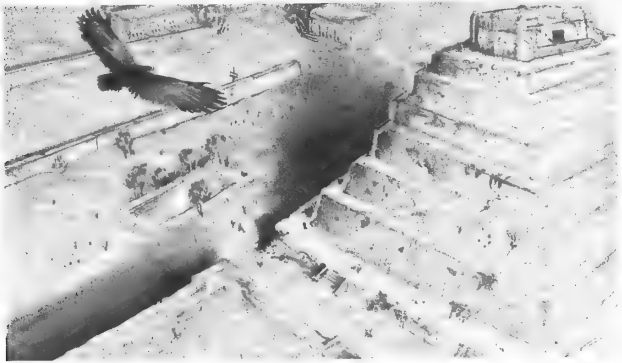
Psychoportation: teleport, dimensional door, teleport trigger

Telepathy (primary): domination (+1), probe, mind link, conceal thoughts, contact, ego whip, id insinuation, invisibility (+1), mind bar, phobia amplification

Defense Modes: mind blank, thought shield, mental barrier, tower of iron will, intellect fortress

Thakok-An is 6½ feet tall, slender for a human, bulky for an elf, but average for a half-elf. His hair is long and black, accenting the twin yellow orbs of his eyes. He keeps his hair braided, with the braid hanging over his left shoulder and down his chest.

Like many Athasians, he wears a facial cover. A piece of jeweled hide covers the upper part of his face, with two large holes for his eyes and a wide slot for his nose. His headdress is ornate,



with a triple ridge running over the skull and down the back. Loose-flowing robes of brilliant white complete his garb. He carries a bone spear, delicately carved, and treats it as a symbol of his office, although it is not. Thakok-An rarely wears armor, but he does have access to a set of hide armor.

Background: In the world of Athas, in the land of the Ringing Mountains, there once was a great city named Kalidnay. In its time it was as prosperous as Balic or any of the other city-states. It was ruled by the sorceress-queen Kalid-Ma. Her iron grip was tempered only by her great vanity. Kalid-Ma was noted for her strict laws and even stricter enforcement of them. Even her own templars were not immune to the law. Kalidnay had a reputation for being a harsh but fair city, an extremely unusual reputation for any city in Athas.

Her most loyal templar, and secret admirer, was Thakok-An. A thoroughly vicious man, he retained his post by zealously enforcing all decrees and constantly extolling Kalid-Ma's virtues, which appealed to her vanity. Singing the praises of his queen was easy, since he desired her above all things. Her approval was so important to him that if ever it was withheld, he expunged his despair in the tortured bodies of the city's prisoners.

The sorceress-queen of Kalidnay was strong in the arts of magic and the mind. So strong, in fact, that the sorcerer-kings of the other cities feared her greatly. Driven by their fear and jealously, they plotted to have her killed.

Thakok-An learned of their plot. Maddened by the thought of losing the one thing he desired above all, he sought any means to save Kalid-Ma for himself. A man who truly loved her would have told Kalid-Ma of the plan. Thakok-An chose instead to save her from them and thereby earn her undying devotion.

With virtually complete access to the palace, it was an easy matter to pry open the books and tomes of arcane lore that the sorceress-queen kept. In them he learned how to metamorphosize her. The price would be high, but he did not hesitate a moment to pay it.

Thakok-An made his many preparations. On the eve of the ceremony, he brought his whole family up to the top of the ziggurat. One by one he slaughtered them in gruesome fashion. Their blood soaked the stones of the ziggurat, staining it in treachery for all time.

When the sorceress-queen chanted the final invocation of the *metamorphosis* spell, the ziggurat cracked. The life forces of all the people of the city were drained, save that of Thakok-An, crouched upon the top of the collapsing building. This was all wrong! Too many people were dying. From what the templar had read, the ziggurat should not have cracked, nobody else should have died, and Kalid-Ma would have metamorphosized.

Thakok-An awoke amid the rubble atop the broken ziggurat. He had obviously been struck unconscious by a falling rock. The city was empty, the streets devoid of life. Climbing to the top of the palace towers, he looked for any lights or signs of people. He saw instead that Kalidnay now sat on a plateau in a silt sea. No other land was visible in any direction. On the

edges of the city, lights and smoke told him that only the center of the city had been made lifeless.

It took a month of labor to clear the ziggurat. In the dark, twisted corridors below it he found Kalid-Ma. Her body was indeed unchanged. In fact she lived, but slept eternally. No force has yet been able to awaken her, nor is Thakok-An sure that he wants her to awaken. Kalid-Ma belongs only to him, but the victory is ashes in his mouth.

Current Sketch: Thakok-An is the keeper of the sorceress-queen. Should she ever awaken, Kalid-Ma would surely slay him. If she sleeps he is denied her favor eternally. This no-win situation gnaws at his breast eternally.

The dark powers of Ravenloft have made Kalid-Ma sleep as if in a coma. Her defiler nature keeps her alive. As time passes, she instinctively draws upon the life force around her to prolong her existence. If she were left unattended, all of Kalidnay would become a dust bowl of ashes and bones.

To keep what little arable land there is in Kalidnay, Thakok-An holds regular arena bouts. He has learned that anyone dying in the arena adds their life force to Kalid-Ma's power. So long as she is kept powered, everything in Kalidnay is safe, especially Thakok-An. So long as she has power, the templar is able to cast his spells. Kalid-Ma has become a living battery of defiler magic.

The evil templar has been granted a special power in Ravenloft. He is able to life drain as the psychometabolic devotion. However, he can do it at a distance of 60 feet (normally it requires a touch). He has the choice of absorbing the life force himself or giving it to Kalid-Ma. He can only transmit the stolen life force to her if he is in the ziggurat. Thakok-An must still pay the normal PSP cost for using the power and still has to make a powers check. It is rumored that prisoners of the city are sometimes tortured and drained to feed the sleeping sorceress-queen.

Thakok-An fears all wizards, particularly defilers. Should a powerful defiler cast too many spells, the fragile ecosystem of Kalidnay would be endangered. Since any wizard is a potential defiler, they all go to the arena. They are stripped of their spell books, of course.

The local population tries to capture lone travelers or weak bands and sell them to the arena masters. Strangers in the arena always provide new excitement, as well as reducing the chances of a citizen of the city being conscripted. Anyone entering Kalidnay should be well armed and well prepared.

Thakok-An has a few templars that he trusts. They do not know the secret of Kalid-Ma, but they can receive spells from her. Thakok-An is able to direct the sleeping sorceress-queen to grant them the magic they request.

As a half-elf, he has befriended a tembo and made it his pet. These vicious creatures are known to hunt elven children and carry them off. Having a pet of this nature appeals to Thakok-An.

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Ravenloft

Boxed Set

Nova Arcanum

The Necromancies of Strahd Von Zarovich

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Credits

Design: Bruce Nesmith
Editing: Mike Breault
Box Cover Art: Clyde Caldwell
Booklet Cover Art: Stephen Fabian
Interior Art: Stephen Fabian and Bob Klasnich
Cartography: David C. Sutherland III and Dennis Kauth
Graphic Design: Roy E. Parker
Typography: Tracey Zamagne

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TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

INTRODUCTION

entertained Danalie this evening. She was a young damsel, by my standards, confused and frightened. Her trust was hard won. A priestess of no small stature, she insisted on divining my true nature. Of course she discovered nothing. Convinced that I intended no harm, she accepted my invitation. Her journey to my land had not been an easy one, so I laid before her a repast worthy of kings.

I sipped at wine while Danalie ate heartily for one so small. Her conversation was fascinating. She innocently spoke of the new magic being discovered in her homeland; mages mastering the forces of chaos and priests able to draw upon the power of the devoted.

Sleepy and full of the food of mortals that I no longer craved, she was easy prey. I could no longer resist the song of her blood, pounding against the walls of her heart. Now awake and fearful, she called upon the power of her god to drive me from her. My laughter echoed off the stone walls of Castle Ravenloft as she snatched up a candlestick. Though I felt the fire of her conviction strike me as a blow, it did not withstand the wind of my will.

"Your god has no power here!" I hissed. With one blow I dashed the silver trinket from her grasp.

Her last words were "What form of vampyre are you to deny the command of my god?"

A short time later I told her pale, drained corpse, "I am The Ancient, I am The Land." On the eve of the morrow, she will willingly tell me all she knows of this new magic. Only then will I release her to seek sustenance from the veins of some hapless traveler.

A fragment from the diary of
Count Strahd Von Zarovich

The magical arts are always changing. Wizards, rarely content with what they know, push the boundaries of arcane knowledge year after year. Priests petition their deities for new ways to aid the devoted and promote the divine cause. Needless to say, the wizards and priests of Ravenloft do not rest on their laurels either. They learn from those whose unwary tread leads them into the mists. They explore the limits of the arcane. On one point they all agree: it is unwise to assume that a spell or magical item will work in the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting as it does elsewhere.

First among wizards in this dark place is the vampire lord Strahd Von Zarovich. He is a 16th-level necromancer and well schooled in the mystic arts. Here, in these pages, the reader will discover a small fragment of what Strahd has learned about magic.

Many might say that the lich Azalin is the better mage. Those scholars should be reminded that Azalin's curse is that he cannot learn or use new magic. He must watch helplessly as others of lesser skill learn and

grow. No crueler fate could the Dark Powers of Ravenloft have given him.

All of the spells and magical items from the *Tome of Magic* are reviewed in this booklet. There are also several new spells and magical items unique to Ravenloft. How these new spells and items would work outside of the demiplane of dread is not known to any mortal.

The following are lists of the spells and items whose functions or effects are changed in the realm of Ravenloft. For spells that are reversible, the reverse is printed in italics. If only one of the variations of a spell is affected by the laws of Ravenloft, the unaffected spell is shown in parentheses.

Affected Wizard Spells

Conjure Spell Component (1st)
Metamorphose Liquids (1st)
Nahal's Nonsensical Nullifier (2nd)
Alternate Reality (3rd)
Lorloveim's Creeping Shadow (3rd) *
Locate Creature (4th)
Mask of Death (4th)
Summon Lycanthrope (4th) *
Khazid's Procurement (5th)
Bloodstone's Spectral Steed (6th) *
Lorloveim's Shadowy Transformation (6th) *
Bloodstone's Frightful Joining (7th) *
Shadowcat (7th)
Abi-Dalzim's Horrid Wilting (8th) *
Hornung's Random Dispatcher (8th)
Estate Transference (9th)
Wail of the Banshee (9th) *

Affected Magical Items

Curdled Death *
Powder of the Hero's Heart
Bag of Bones *
Dimensional Mine
Disintegration Chamber *
Globe of Serenity
Horn of Valor
Law's Banner
Mist Tent
Necklace of Memory Enhancement
Teleportation Chamber
Thought Bottle
Trimia's Catalogue of Outer Plane Artifacts

Affected Priest Spells

Analyze Balance (1st)
Courage (1st)
Emotion Read (1st)
Know Age (1st)
Morale (1st)
Speak with Astral Traveler (1st)
Thought Capture (1st)
Create Holy Symbol (2nd) *
Mind Read (2nd)
Mystic Transfer (2nd)
Nap (2nd)
Rally (2nd)
Sanctify/*Defile* (2nd) *
Astral Window (3rd)
Choose Future (3rd)
Emotion Control (3rd)
Helping Hand (3rd)
Dimensional Folding (4th)
Focus (4th) *
Join with Astral Traveler (4th)
Leadership/*Doubt* (4th)
Modify Memory (4th) *
Probability Control (4th)
Rapport (4th)
Thought Broadcast (4th)
Weather Stasis (4th)
Age Creature/(*Restore Youth*) (6th) *
The Great Circle/*The Black Circle* (6th) *
Group Mind (6th)
Land of Stability (6th)
Sol's Searing Orb (6th)
(Breath of Life)/*Breath of Death* (7th) *
Shadow Engines (7th)
Spirit of Power (7th) *
Uncontrolled Weather (7th)
Animal Horde (quest)
Circle of Sunmotes (quest)
Conformance (quest)
Elemental Swarm (quest)
Etherwalk (quest)
Highway (quest)
Imago Interrogation (quest)
Planar Quest (quest)
Revelation (quest)
Storm of Vengeance (quest)
Undead Plague (quest) *
Ward Matrix (quest)

* Ravenloft powers check is required.

In the *Tome of Magic* book, new types of wizards were introduced—the wild mages and elemental wizards. A new type of magic accompanied the wild mage, appropriately called *wild magic*. There is even a new form of spells called *metamagic*.

Wild Mages

This new breed of sorcerer seeks the secrets of the theoretical underpinnings of magic. They are as interested in how magic works as they are in using it. Wild mages have discovered the secrets of chaos. They are able to use the principles of uncertainty to chart a steady course through the arcane arts.

Recently a wild mage was invited to sup with Count Von Zarovich. From her, the vampire lord extracted many secrets concerning this new art. The abilities of wild mages are unchanged in Ravenloft, but as Strahd's guest learned, their spells have been affected by the mists of this place.

It is important to remember that the rules of Ravenloft take precedence over the effects of wild surges. A wild surge can never remove a curse or undo the effects of a failed Ravenloft powers check. It cannot violate any of the unspoken rules of Ravenloft, including the inability to magically distinguish good from evil, the ability of self-willed undead to disguise themselves mentally, the inability to walk the planes, etc. Any wild surge that will detrimentally affect a lord of a domain has a 50% chance of actually affecting a different target. Annoyance effects or beneficial effects of wild surges work as usual in Ravenloft.

Elemental Wizards

The elemental wizard does not use newly discovered spells so much as he uses the old spells in a new fashion. Instead of organizing them by school, he thinks in terms of nature's elements: earth, water, air, and fire. Of all the new practitioners of the art, he suffers the fewest changes in Ravenloft.

Metamagic

Spells affecting other spells: that's the main thrust of metamagic. These things have little to do with the concerns of the dark powers. Hence these spells are scarcely changed in Ravenloft. The changes are noted in the following paragraphs.

1st-Level Spells

Conjure Spell Component

This spell cannot retrieve components from outside the domain where it is cast. The priest is not made aware that this is the reason for the spell failing.

Metamorphose Liquids

This spell is unchanged in Ravenloft. However, a special note needs to be made about vampires. Changing water into blood can be done, but the vampire cannot sustain himself in this way in Ravenloft. Such blood lacks the vital component of the owner's life force that the vampire requires. Drinking blood made with this spell causes the vampire to vomit 1d4 turns later.

Any evil creature that sustains itself solely on fluids from a living creature suffers like the vampire. For example, if a strange form of lycanthrope is encountered, and it must drink spinal fluid to survive, this spell cannot provide sustenance for it. Normal creatures can still draw nourishment from water or other fluids created by this spell.

2nd-Level Spells

Nahal's Nonsensical Nullifier

This spell scrambles detection spell results. In Ravenloft, only the lawful and chaotic portions of alignment can be detected. After this spell has scrambled the detected alignment, the lawful and chaotic portions are still the only parts of the alignment reported.

3rd-Level Spells

Alternate Reality

The dark powers of Ravenloft hold sway over reality in this demiplane. As a result, die rolls that are unique to Ravenloft are largely unaffected by this spell. Fear checks, horror checks, madness checks, and Ravenloft powers checks cannot be changed from failed rolls into successful ones (though the DM should feign rerolling). However, the secondary die rolls determining the precise results of these failed checks *can* be rerolled.

For example, a character who fails a horror check ends up obsessed with the scene that caused the check. He casts this spell to get a new horror check roll. The rerolled horror check automatically fails (although the game master rolls a die to fool the player). If that same character had cast the spell to affect the *result* of the horror check, however, he might end up with an aversion rather than an obsession.

Lorloveim's Creeping Shadow

The essence of this spell is to animate the caster's shadow and be able to see through its eyes and hear through its ears. Manipulating the stuff of shadows is dangerous in Ravenloft. The shadows sometimes take on a life of their own.

The game master must secretly roll a saving throw vs. spell for the caster on the round he casts the spell. If it succeeds, nothing happens and the caster may be unaware that it was even possible for something unusual to happen. If the saving throw fails, then the shadow is animated. However, there are two different ways

that it might be animated, with an equal chance of either. Once animated (either way), it remains so until killed. The caster also loses his real shadow until that time. Seeing a person without a shadow is rather spooky. NPCs are likely to think the worst about a character without a shadow.

The first way the shadow may be animated, and probably the one most anticipated by the characters, is to become a monster (see "Shadow" in *Monstrous Compendium* Volume One). Such a monster will seek to kill the caster, but not necessarily immediately. It is more likely to follow him around and wait for the best opportunity. The shadow is more than willing to flee if it's in danger of being destroyed. Of course, if it is attacked it will defend itself.

The second way the shadow may become animated is to suck the caster's personality into it. A shadow monster now inhabits his fleshly body. The creature in possession of the wizard's body will attempt to kill the shadow PC. Further, the creature will attempt to enlist the help of other player characters.

Since the other players would detect the reversal immediately, have the character's player keep control of that PC for the first day. That night, the shadow monster runs away with the body. The player now plays a shadow in search of his body. Of course since the shadow can't talk, he might have some problem convincing the other characters that he is not a monster himself. Each day, the monster PC must roll a system shock roll. If he fails, he becomes a shadow forever and the player must roll up a new character. If the hapless PC fails any other Ravenloft powers check in the course of the game, he also becomes a shadow forever and the player must roll up a new character.

4th-Level Spells

Locate Creature

This spell is unable to cross the misty borders that separate one domain from another. A creature on the other side of such a border cannot be detected by the caster even if he is within normal range. The lord of a domain gets a saving throw vs. spell to avoid being found by the spell.

Mask of Death

This spell normally enables the caster to alter the features of a dead body to resemble another person. In Ravenloft the intrepid adventurer should not dabble too readily with the dead. The caster must roll a saving throw vs. death; failure indicates that he takes on the features of the dead body. If the body is in an obvious state of decay, then the caster will look like a zombie. The spellcaster is unaware of this change. Unless he looks in a mirror or someone tells him, he assumes that nothing is wrong.

If *animate dead* is cast upon a corpse after its features have been altered, the caster must roll a Ravenloft powers check. There is an additional effect if the altered, animated corpse has been given the appearance of someone already dead. The corpse becomes a wight, animated by the true spirit of the dead person. The wight is unlikely to be pleased at returning from the dead into someone else's body, even if it does look like its own.

Summon Lycanthrope

For this spell to work at all, the caster and the lycanthrope must be within the same domain in Ravenloft. The lord of a domain can be summoned in this manner only if he allows it. Upon arrival, the lycanthrope lord of the domain is not bound by the magical circle, although he may pretend to be for a time.

Once summoned, a lycanthrope has a base chance to break the imprisoning circle. Normally this is a 20% chance plus (or minus) the difference in level/Hit Dice between the caster and the lycanthrope. In Ravenloft, the base chance is 50%, adding or subtracting the difference in level/Hit Dice. The lycanthrope has a much greater chance to escape the circle here.

Summoning a lycanthrope is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

5th-Level Spells

Khazid's Procurement

This spell will not enable a gate to be opened beyond the borders of the wizard's current domain. If the ingredient does not exist in that domain, then the spell fails.

6th-Level Spells

Bloodstone's Spectral Steed

The sight of the spectral steed causes 0-level humans or other non-classed people to roll a fear check. The wizard is not required to roll a check since he summoned it. Anyone seeing it up close (within 30 feet) must roll a horror check. Once again, the wizard who cast the spell need not check. However, the wizard is subject to a Ravenloft powers check.

Upon casting this spell, the wizard must roll a saving throw vs. spell. If it fails, the creature solidifies and becomes an undead creature. Visually it is indistinguishable from the spell form. It is, in effect, a Strahd's Skeletal Steed (RAVENLOFT® *Monstrous Compendium* Appendix) capable of flying with a speed of 24 and a movement class of C. The beast still looks like a skeletal vulture. The hoof/hoof/bite attack of Strahd's Skeletal Steed translates to a claw/claw/beak attack in this vulture form. It retains an animal level intelligence and is not at all controlled by the wizard.

The undead creature has only one goal—to kill the wizard that caused its tortured existence. It will not attack immediately if the party appears to be strong and well prepared. Instead it will try to flee. It will follow the wizard at a distance, for years if necessary, awaiting the perfect moment to strike. Of course, if it is attacked it immediately defends itself.

Lorloveim's Shadowy Transformation

This is a dangerous spell to cast in the demiplane of dread. To willingly dabble in the realm of shadow is risky. The wizard never knows when the shadow might take on a life of its own. Casting this spell is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

When the spell expires, the creature that has been transformed into shadow must roll another saving throw vs. spell. If the creature fails, it becomes a shadow fiend (RAVENLOFT *Monstrous Compendium*). If the creature was unwillingly transformed into a shadow, it gets a +4 bonus to the saving throw.

The shadow fiend will attempt to flee the scene. It will follow the mage for months if necessary, awaiting the ideal moment to attack.

7th-Level Spells

Bloodstone's Frightful Joining

While most necromantic spells work better in Ravenloft, this is an exception. The will of the undead is greater here than in most planes, providing them with greater resistance to this spell. Self-willed undead creatures get a +2 bonus to the saving throw. The necromancer must be in the same domain as the undead monster that he is attempting to join.

It would almost be better for the necromancer to not succeed with this spell. Joining oneself with an undead monster is cause for a Ravenloft powers check. When the spell expires or is cancelled, the wizard must roll a saving throw vs. spell to return to his body. If it fails, the caster's personality is lost forever and the undead monster's personality returns to its body. The body of the necromancer is now truly dead.

Once the caster's mind is in the undead body, the monster's mind continuously assaults the wizard's mind with ghastly thoughts. Once an hour, at the beginning of the time period, the necromancer must roll a madness check. Failure means that the undead monster's mind has overcome that of the wizard. The wizard's mind returns to its body. Once there it must roll a system shock roll as described in the spell description. If the wizard is still alive, he is an insane slave under the complete control of the undead creature that he joined.

Shadowcat

Upon casting this spell, the character must roll a saving throw vs. spell for the caster. If it

fails, the cat becomes a slow shadow (GREYHAWK® *Monstrous Compendium* Appendix). The slow shadow will try to kill the wizard that summoned it. Generally this means fleeing initially so that it can attack him when he least expects it.

8th-Level Spells

Abi-Dalzim's Horrid Wilting

Any humanoid creature killed by this spell must roll a saving throw vs. death. If the roll fails, the creature becomes a mummy. The mummy will not attack immediately, awaiting a proper time. If necessary, it will wait until the wizard and his companions have left. It has years in which to plan its revenge upon the mage. If the wizard uses this spell against a humanoid, he suffers a Ravenloft powers check.

Hornung's Random Dispatcher

This spell just plain doesn't work. The demiplane of Ravenloft is closed to interplanar spells.

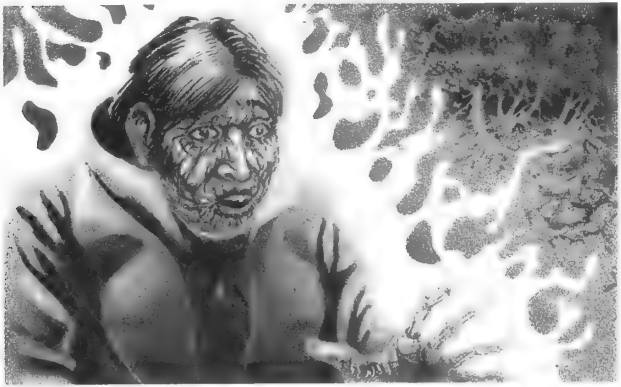
9th-Level Spells

Estate Transference

Since Ravenloft is a demiplane and not a Prime Material plane, this spell doesn't work here. Additionally the demiplane of dread is closed to interplanar travel via spells.

Wail of the Banshee

Like many necromantic spells, this one actually works better in Ravenloft. Normally it has a range of 30 feet, but in the demiplane of dread, it has a range of 60 feet. Any female humanoid, not necessarily an elf, who is killed by this spell becomes a banshee. These created banshees owe no loyalty to the mage who created them. In fact they may try to wreak vengeance upon him. Using this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.



The *Tome of Magic* book introduced new rules for priests. These rules included quest spells, faith magic, cooperative magic, and many new spheres. Despite the malevolent influence of the dark powers, the deities of other planes can still hear the pleas and prayers of their favored priests. This of course doesn't guarantee that those deities will answer.

Quest Spells

Most of the rules for quest spells outlined in the *Tome of Magic* book still apply in Ravenloft. The quest spells in particular are reserved for situations that are at the heart of a deity's interests. Since no deity appears to have a great interest in the activities of the demiplane of Ravenloft, few quest spells should be granted. Even deities who represent the forces of good seem to turn a blind eye to Ravenloft. It is not enough to say that the quest spell should be granted to help wipe out the forces of evil. The cause must be much more directly related to the deity's interests.

The alterations to quest spells described in this book are optional interpretations. The direct attention of the deity is involved to receive a quest spell; it is quite conceivable that the deity could force his power to override the restrictions of Ravenloft.

The game master must make his judgments based upon the adventure and his campaign. If his adventure and campaign are better served by keeping the original definition of the quest spell, then he should do so. If the spirit and flavor of the game is better served by altering the spell to fit the restrictions of the Ravenloft campaign, then he should do that. Keep in mind that this is a gothic horror setting. The characters are supposed to be frightened and feel as if they are weak and powerless. They are also supposed to be able to win in the end.

Faith Magic

Faith magic works on the principle of devotional power, which is accumulated through mass worship. The more worshipers, the stronger the magic. Since there are few organized religions in Ravenloft, faith magic is difficult to achieve. There just isn't much devotional power. There are several underground religions and there are a few large accepted religions. For example, the domain of G'henna is ruled by an evil priest capable of wielding faith magic of immense power.

Cooperative Magic

By and large, cooperative magic is unaffected in Ravenloft. The idea of several priests operating together for a single spell effect is not relevant to the concerns of the demiplane of dread.

Sphere of War

The spells in this sphere are intended for use in BATTLESYSTEM™ or BATTLESYSTEM™ *Skirmishes* games. However, these games are rarely used in Ravenloft. Gothic fantasy horror and medieval fantasy battles just don't go together very well.

There is one place where the use of war spells is appropriate. On occasions a group of angry villagers (usually brandishing torches and pitchforks) may go monster hunting. This is a classic scene drawn from the old horror movies. Some of the spells from the sphere of war are appropriate to use on a crowd of irate villagers. These spells cannot create a mob or incite a crowd to go after the monster. The situation must already exist in which a mob or crowd has gathered with the express purpose to hunt down a monster, break into a castle, or do some other mass combat activity.

There must be at least ten adults in the crowd for it to qualify as a unit in BATTLESYSTEM game terms. Anything less than ten is just a small group of individuals. Every mob must have a leader. Usually this is a particularly

incensed member of the crowd, someone who has been personally wronged by the monster. It is very possible for a player character to lead a mob. If the leader ever falls, there is a 25% chance of a new leader arising from the ranks of the mob. This is again someone personally wronged by the situation or monster.

As a mob, they have a morale rating of 9. When used in an adventure, crowds and mobs do not roll fear or horror checks; those are reserved for individuals. The mob rolls a morale check in any circumstance normally dictated by the AD&D® game rules and in any situation in which an individual would roll a fear or horror check in Ravenloft.

1st-Level Spells

Analyze Balance

In Ravenloft, no spell or magical item can reveal the good or evil part of a creature's alignment. When assessing how many "grades" a creature is removed from neutral, the only possible answers are 1 and 0. The spell would only detect that a creature is lawful or chaotic (1 away from neutral) or neutral (0 away from neutral). This same rule applies to analyzing the alignment of areas, objects, or anything else.

Courage

As noted earlier for spells in the sphere of war, a crowd of villagers can be given courage with this spell. The first time they are required to roll a morale check, they automatically pass it. This is most likely to be when they first sight the monster up close. Unfortunately for the mob, another morale check is sure to be needed if they actually begin fighting the monster. The spell lasts until the next dawn, or 12 hours, whichever is greater.

Emotion Read

This spell is unchanged in Ravenloft. However, it is worth reminding the Dungeon Master that self-willed undead can project a barrier of false thoughts, which includes emotions. In general, undead find it difficult and distasteful to project the gentler emotions

of love, sympathy, compassion, etc. They tend to project neutral or negative emotions, such as anger, jealously, and hatred.

Know Age

This spell judges the age of the physical body. In the case of many undead, this provides interesting answers. The bodies of some undead, such as vampires, are arrested at the moment of their deaths. A vampire might really be 400 years old, but his body is preserved at 37. Zombies, skeletons, and the like do not have preserved bodies. The same is true for incorporeal creatures, such as ghosts and banshees. For all of these cases, the spell functions as normal.

Any creature whose body has ceased aging gets a saving throw vs. spell. If successful, the spell only reports the apparent age of the body. If the saving throw fails, it reports the true age from the moment of the creature's birth.

Morale

As stated in the *Tome of Magic* book, this

spell improves the morale of a unit. In Ravenloft, the most likely use of this is with a crowd of villagers that is storming the castle or chasing the monster. If raised by 1, the mob has a morale of 10. If raised by 3, it has a morale 12. This improvement remains in effect until the next dawn or for 12 hours, whichever is longer.

Speak With Astral Traveler

Since astral travel doesn't work in Ravenloft, there aren't any astral travelers to use this spell on. If through some outrageous quirk of domain laws an astral traveler is encountered, then the spell works normally.

Thought Capture

This spell is similar to the psionic metapsionic devotion retrospection. It says that there are wandering thoughts that have been set loose from their owners. In Ravenloft such thoughts still bear the stamp of the personalities who created them. The thoughts of the lords of the domains are stronger than others. As a result, there is roughly a 10% chance that any *thought capture* spell gathers a thought from the dark lord of the domain. If the nature of the place is such that the lord of the domain visits it regularly or has great personal interest in it, the chance rises to 50%.

Such thoughts can be tainted with foul evil and horrors that should not be contemplated by ordinary mortals. Depending upon the thoughts received, the priest might have to roll a horror check. Thoughts of great horror and anguish will hold the greatest emotional weight and are therefore more likely to be picked up first.

2nd-Level Spells

Create Holy Symbol

This spell works normally, but the lord of the domain is instantly made aware of the fact that a holy symbol has been created somewhere in his domain. If the symbol is of any evil alignment, that is all he learns. If the symbol is of any neutral alignment, he can pin it down to a ten-mile-diameter area. If it is of any good alignment, he knows the location of the priest to within a one-mile radius. Creating an evil holy symbol warrants a Ravenloft powers check.

Mind Read

This spell has difficulty penetrating the barrier of false thoughts presented by self-willed undead. Although normal folk get no saving throw, self-willed undead do. If the saving throw succeeds, then the undead creature can plant whatever thoughts it wished into the caster's mental net. If the saving throw fails, the priest penetrates the veil and is drawn into the foul depths of the creature's evil mind. He learns everything listed in the spell description. However, he must roll a madness check after experiencing the horror of the mind of an undead. A madness check may also be necessary for mind reading some living creatures, if their minds are brimming with loathsome evil. Mind flayers are an excellent example. Sometimes an undead creature chooses not to resist the spell, allowing the priest a look at things mortals were not meant to know.

Mystic Transfer

Unlike many spells in Ravenloft, this one is able to cross the borders that separate domains. However, the lord of either domain needs only to close his borders to sever the link. This spell cannot cross a closed domain border.

Nap

This spell can negate the effects of a failed fear check. The passage of time and a good sleep are enough to undo the failed fear check. The *nap* spell is not as successful on failed horror checks. However, the victim of a failed horror check is allowed a new check with this spell. It also allows a temporary respite from the obsession result, even if the new horror check fails. Any accumulated penalties are wiped clean by this refreshing sleep.

Rally

Although designed specifically for use with the BATTLESYSTEM™ rules, this spell can also be used with a mob or crowd of villagers. If the mob has failed a morale check (and is probably fleeing the scene) this spell might rally it. Another morale check is rolled, and if successful, the mob recovers its lost poise and is able to approach the monster again.

Sanctify/*Defile*

This spell works normally in Ravenloft. If cast in a sinkhole of evil, the two effects cancel each other out. For the duration of the spell, that area is normal, without either good or evil modifiers. If the area of the sinkhole exceeds the area of the spell effect, then the region not covered by the spell is still a sinkhole of evil with the original modifiers.

The reverse of this spell, *defile*, adds its bonuses to those of the sinkhole, making the place even more foul and evil. Using this spell forces the caster to roll a Ravenloft powers check.

3rd-Level Spells

Astral Window

The Astral plane is not accessible with most spells in Ravenloft. However, *astral window* does not attempt to move anything between Ravenloft and the Astral plane. The spell works normally, but creatures cannot leave Ravenloft through the window. They can still enter the demiplane of dread if they succeed in the roll described in the *Tome of Magic* entry.

Choose Future

For the most part, this spell is unchanged in Ravenloft. Horror checks are not rerolled for the alternate future, however. One roll is made and it applies to both futures. The game master could roll some dice to pretend that it might have been possible to get a different result.

Emotion Control

This spell is unchanged in Ravenloft. The courage option can be used to remove the effects of a failed fear check. In that case, it just cancels the fear and does not provide its normal bonuses. There is no such reprieve from a failed horror check with this spell.

Helping Hand

This ghostly hand is unable to cross the border of a domain. If the person or creature is in a different domain than the caster, the hand is unable to find him.

4th-Level Spells

Dimensional Folding

This spell cannot connect areas in different domains. The priest is unable to fold the demiplane to connect to any area outside his domain.

Focus

Most domain lords are able to detect the casting of a *focus* spell. They know that one has been cast somewhere in their domain, but they do not know exactly where. A focus devoted to an evil alignment does not give away any more information than that. A focus devoted to a neutral alignment can be identified within a mile of its true location. One of good alignment is pinned down to within 100 yards.

Not all domain lords can detect the presence of foci in their domains. Dark lords that are steeped in the arcane lore of magic tend to have this power, as do those of strong supernatural origin. However, lords of more normal and mortal backgrounds are usually incapable of detecting a focus any better than their subjects. For example, Strahd Von Zarovich, Azalin, or Harkon Lukas could most certainly detect a focus. On the other hand, Vlad Drakov and Ivana Boritsi could not.

The *focus* spell as listed in the *Tome of Magic* contains only good effects that can be built into the focus. Some spells listed are reversible, and those effects are also valid.

Reversible Spells
Bless/Curse *
Cure Blindness/Cause Blindness*

Cure Disease/Cause Disease *
Detect Lie/Undetectable Lie
Dispel Evil/Dispel Good *
Know Alignment/Undetectable Alignment
Protection from Evil/Protection from Good *
Purify Food & Drink/Putrefy Food & Drink *
Remove Fear/Cause Fear *
Tongues/Babble
True Seeing/False Seeing

Creating a focus from any spell marked with an asterisk (*) is cause for a Ravenloft powers check. Using the reverses of these spells is not cause for a check. Creating a focus devoted to an evil deity regardless of the *focus* spell also warrants a Ravenloft powers check.

In Ravenloft, there are a few additional spells that can be cast upon the focus. As in the previous list, those marked with an asterisk force the caster to roll a Ravenloft powers check.

New Spells
Accelerate Healing
Anti-Vermin Barrier
Aura of Comfort
Calm Chaos
Efficacious Monster Ward
Elemental Forbiddance
Emotion Control @
Land of Stability
Slow Rot
Undead Ward
Zone of Sweet Air
Zone of Truth

@ A single emotion must be specified.

Join With Astral Traveler

This spell just plain doesn't work in Ravenloft. The chances that the characters find the body of an astral traveler in Ravenloft are very slim to begin with. Even if one were found, the spell would fail.

Leadership/*Doubt*

The BATTLESYSTEM™ game use for this spell is inappropriate for Ravenloft. However, the priest can single out a person in a mob and make him into a leader. This new leader could then lead the mob in search of the monster. The presence of the leader grants the mob a +1 morale bonus. Should the leader die while leading, the mob must immediately roll a morale check. Refer to the "Sphere of War" rules earlier for more information about mobs and crowds of villagers.

The reverse of this spell, *doubt*, removes leadership qualities from a person. If successfully cast upon the leader of a mob, the mob must immediately roll a morale check. Even if the check succeeds, the mob no longer gets the bonus for having a leader. It is able to attack an immediately visible target, but if there is no obvious path or target for their rage, the mob disperses.

Modify Memory

This spell is capable of negating the effects of a failed fear or horror check. This is done by either wiping the memory of the event from the person or altering his memory so that the horror of the situation is masked.

This spell can be used for sinister effect as well. It can force a person to relive a scene that was originally cause for a horror check. The victim reacts as if he were really there. If a previous horror check for that situation failed, then the results of that check may come back to haunt him. For example, if the result had been aversion, the character will feel the need to run in horror. If the previous check succeeded, he needs to roll a new horror check, with a bonus for having survived the scene before.

Making a person relive a scene of horror for the express purpose of making him fail the check is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Probability Control

This spell cannot alter the probabilities or effects of a fear or horror check. It operates only on the chances of success of an action taken by a creature. Since fear and horror checks are reactions, not actions, this spell has no effect upon them.

Rapport

As stated many times elsewhere, self-willed undead have the ability to raise a barrier of false thoughts. If such a creature chooses to enter a rapport with a priest, it has a choice. It can feed innocent thoughts and emotions via the barrier, or it can allow the priest a true glimpse of its malevolent inner self.

Any normal person who gets a close look at the twisted mind of a self-willed undead monster must roll a madness check. For this reason, it is not uncommon for the undead monster to allow the priest access to its mind, knowing what the effects are likely to be. Since the participants in a rapport choose which thoughts and emotions to share, the undead creature need not reveal anything of importance.

Thought Broadcast

Any self-willed undead subjected to this spell broadcasts only false thoughts from its barrier. It has total control over these thoughts and can make them be anything, even the opposite of its true thoughts.

Weather Stasis

The effects of the spell cannot override the lord of the domain's control of the weather. The dark lord may choose to let the spell work normally, however. If the spell and the lord of the domain both attempt to exert control over the weather, the dark lord always wins.

6th-Level Spells

Age Creature/(*Restore Youth*)

Any humanoid killed by this spell must roll a saving throw vs. spell. If it fails, he becomes a ghost. Intentionally killing a person with this spell is cause for a Ravenloft powers check. The reverse of this spell, *restore youth*, is unchanged in Ravenloft.

The Great Circle/*The Black Circle*

Undead are stronger in Ravenloft than in other planes and realms. This spell has a reduced effect in the demiplane of dread. Any undead in the area of effect with 6 Hit Dice or fewer (8 Hit Dice is the limit in other planes and realms) are destroyed. All other undead suffer 1d6 points of damage (1d8 points elsewhere) per priest in the circle. Creatures of evil alignment suffer 1d4 points of damage (1d6 points elsewhere) per priest in the circle. In both cases the creatures may roll a saving throw vs. death to halve the damage.

The reverse of this spell, *the black circle*, works as described in the *Tome of Magic* book. However, casting it is cause for a Ravenloft powers check for each priest in the circle.

Group Mind

This spell is based upon the *rapport* spell (see earlier). The same limitations for that spell apply to *group mind*. Basically, anyone who experiences the inner workings of the mind of a self-willed undead creature must roll a madness check.

Land of Stability

This spell plays second fiddle to the lord of the domain's control of the land. The lord may decide to let the spell work normally. If his defined powers specify control over the land or any effects described in the spell, he can override the effects of this spell at will. Ravenloft gives its cherished few great powers within their domains.

Sol's Searing Orb

The light from this spell is considered to be the equivalent of daylight. Vampires and other creatures affected by daylight are harmed by this spell as if they were standing outside on a bright summer day for a fraction of a round.

7th-Level Spells

(Breath Of Life)/*Breath Of Death*

The *breath of death* variation of this spell causes the caster to make a Ravenloft powers check.

Shadow Engines

When the spell expires, is cancelled, or is

disrupted for any reason, there is a 50% chance that a small horde of real shadows (as the monsters) rises up from the shattered illusions. The roll is made for each engine as it is dispelled. Each engine spawns 2d8 shadows. The shadows have no loyalty or particular hatred for the priest. They are definitely not under his control.

Spirit of Power

This spell enables several priests of high level to call down an avatar of their deity. To date, this spell has never been attempted in Ravenloft. It is certain that the deity has the ability to send his avatar and make the spell work normally. What is not certain is whether the avatar can return. Ravenloft's one-way gates make this an interesting question. No deity would ever agree to let an avatar become trapped in Ravenloft.

The unspoken law of non-intervention by the deities of the many worlds makes it unlikely that any deity, good or evil, would ever allow its avatar into the demiplane. They could do so, but choose not to. The reasons for this are unclear. Even attempting to summon the avatar of an evil deity is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Uncontrolled Weather

The lord of domain sometimes is able to control the weather or exert certain influences over it. If the dark lord's control is ever at odds with this spell, the dark lord automatically wins. In many cases, the lord of the domain does not bother to contest the spell.

Quest Spells

(Optional Interpretations)

Animal Horde

Some domain lords can control the animals of their lands, at least some species. Any species that is under the control of the dark lord is allowed to answer the summons of this spell. However, the dark lord's control takes precedence over that of the spell. The lord of the domain frequently allows the animals to answer the summons to find out what the priest is up to. Once he knows, the dark lord may or may not choose to override the priest's hold on the animals.

Circle of Sunmotes

The light from the motes is capable of harming creatures vulnerable to normal sunlight. Vampires would be completely destroyed if exposed to the sunmotes for a full round.

Conformance

This spell does not affect the chances of horror checks. All horror checks are still rolled normally. It does make fear checks a simple it-happens/it-doesn't-happen result.

Elemental Swarm

At the end of the spell's duration, the elementals summoned are unable to return to their native plane. This tends to make them a little peeved. Since the spell has expired, the priest no longer has any control over them. The rest is left to your imagination.

Etherwalk

This spell transports the priest and his party to the Border Ethereal. That part of the spell works normally. The Border Ethereal is one of the few "planes" accessible from Ravenloft. Once there, however, the priest and company find themselves unable to travel any deeper into the Ethereal plane. They can choose to re-enter the demiplane of Ravenloft at any time.

Highway

This spell cannot cross the borders between domains if those borders are closed. If the borders are not closed, then they are not obstacles.

Imago Interrogation

This spell enables the priest to travel the planes, and even through time, in spirit form. In Ravenloft he is limited to the demiplane, although time is not a barrier. Further, if the borders to a domain are closed, he cannot cross them.

Planar Quest

This spell is severely restricted in Ravenloft. There are only three planes that have sufficient connections to the demiplane of dread—the Border Ethereal plane, the elemental plane of Shadow, and the Negative Material plane. Even those planes do not allow the traveler from Ravenloft to do more than walk their shores. It is not possible to travel through these planes into any other. The traveler must remain on the fringes of these planes forever or else return to Ravenloft.

Revelation

Even with this spell, the priest is unable to discern good or evil in Ravenloft. All of the restrictions for the *true seeing* spell apply to this one as well.

Storm of Vengeance

As stated several times earlier, the power of the lord of a domain to control the weather takes precedence over any spell. If the dark lord has the power to control the weather, he can calm this storm automatically.

Undead Plague

This spell works far better in Ravenloft than in the Prime Material plane. The normal maximum area of effect is 10,000 square yards, an area 100 yards on a side. In Ravenloft it can work on an area 200 yards on a side, for a total of 40,000 square yards. This translates to 4,000 skeletons. The skeletons are turned as zombies, but remember to use the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting's Turning Undead chart. Casting this spell is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Ward Matrix

This spell is able to join distant wards into a network, so that each ward location gets the cumulative effects of all the wards. In Ravenloft, this spell cannot breach the borders of a domain. Only wards in the same domain as the caster can be included in the matrix.

The *Tome of Magic* book revealed new magical items that had never before been seen. As unwary adventurers bring these into Ravenloft, they will find that not all of them work as expected. There are many dark forces lurking in the shadows, waiting for the adventurer who relies too heavily upon his magical items.

Curdled Death

This aromatic oil is actually more powerful in Ravenloft. Its radius of effect extends to 10 feet instead of 5 feet. Using such an evil substance is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Powder of the Hero's Heart

This powder affects fear checks in Ravenloft. The +2 bonus that is applied to morale checks is also granted for fear checks. Horror checks are unaffected by the powder.

Bag of Bones

This bag can be used to create a small army of skeletons (80 of them). The bag works only in battles where at least 100 creatures per side are involved. This condition is rarely met in Ravenloft. In the rare event that it is and this bag is used, double the normal number of skeletons appear (to 160). The user must also roll a Ravenloft powers check.

Dimensional Mine

Living creatures that are in the extradimensional space when the mine explodes are killed. They are not ejected into the Astral plane.

Disintegration Chamber

Placing a person in one of these chambers is cause for a Ravenloft powers check. Even placing the lord of a domain in one necessitates the check.

Globe of Serenity

The bonuses of this globe are applied to fear and horror checks. Furthermore, the globe can nullify the effects of a failed fear check. If used on a person who failed a horror check, the character gets new check to attempt to recover from the horror.

Horn of Valor

This item functions as described for mobs and crowds of villagers. They receive a +2 bonus to their morale for 1d4x10 rounds. Hearing it also enables a fleeing mob to roll a new morale check. If successful, the mob rallies and may once again approach monsters and the like. If used for a group that stands opposed to the mob, it lowers the mob's morale by 1 for 1d10+10 rounds.

Law's Banner

All the effects of this magical item can be used on mobs and crowds of villagers. It is up to the DM to determine if the mob or crowd is sufficiently lawful. Almost by definition a mob is a chaotic group. However, if the crowd of villagers appears to be highly organized, the game master might rule that it is sufficiently lawful to qualify for this magical item.

Mist Tent

Using this magical item can be highly dangerous in Ravenloft. There is a minimum 5% chance that the land will use the tent like the mists of Ravenloft. If it is used in the mists themselves, the chances rise to 25%. The occupants are transported to some other location in the misty borders of Ravenloft. If the game master needs to keep the characters in their original domain, this new location is in that domain, just at a new place along the border. The mists have no compunctions about transferring the tent to a place above a lake or other dangerous terrain.

Necklace of Memory Enhancement

This item has a vicious effect on anyone who has to roll a horror check. While wearing the necklace, the owner gets no bonuses to horror

checks for the passage of time. The effects of any failed horror checks never leave him. Prolonged use of the necklace (more than a week) under the weight of a failed horror check forces the wearer to roll a madness check. In Ravenloft there are many things best forgotten.

Teleportation Chamber

This arcane device cannot teleport anything outside of a domain when the domain's borders are closed. If they are not, then the chamber functions normally.

Thought Bottle

It is possible for a self-willed undead to place a thought in the bottle that reflects the monster's inner essence. Any mortal who opens the bottle and speaks the command word suddenly experiences the depths of evil of the undead monster's mind. This is cause for a madness check. Vampires and liches occasionally use this magical item as a trap for unwary hunters. Since they rarely lose any thoughts, these creatures have no other use for the bottle.

Trimia's Catalogue of Outer Plane Artifacts

The catalogue itself works almost as described. The sole exception is that there is almost always an additional item required besides the money to acquire the device. Some sample items are a drop of vampire's blood, a feather from a wereraven, a stone from the temple of G'Henna, etc. If the money and the other item are placed upon the book, the magical device appears.

The device that appears is one of the few ways to leave the demiplane of Ravenloft. However, in Ravenloft there is a 20% chance of a malfunction, far greater than the normal 5% chance. The device vanishes when used, whether successful or not. If unsuccessful, the character remains in Ravenloft.

wizard like Count Strahd Von Zarovich is not likely to sit on his laurels. With centuries of undead life to experiment, he has discovered new spells and stolen a few. Strahd is slow and methodical in his pursuit of new magic. Like most undead, the spirit of creativity burns low within his breast. It takes him decades to develop what a human mage can do in a single year. We can all be thankful for the respite—imagine the horror of a vampire mage that could improve its magical power as quickly as a human! The spells set down in this chapter were gleaned from the pages of Strahd's weighty tomes, his *Nova Arcanum*.

A few of these spells are reversed variations of spells found in the *Tome of Magic* book. Having learned the original spells, Count Von Zarovich immediately saw the evil benefit of their reverses. He frequently names these spells after himself.

Although there are a few priest spells listed in this book, Strahd is unable to cast them since he is a necromancer. However, he does have evil priestly minions that can cast them. Like any good strategist, Strahd is always aware of his opponent's capabilities. Priests pose the greatest threat to the vampire lord, so he has made an effort to understand their spell capabilities. Priest spells listed here are those he has discovered from visitors or his extensive spy network. The following is a complete list of new spells found in this book. The reversed versions of *Tome of Magic* spells show the original spell in parentheses.

Wizard Spells
Strahd's Baneful Attractor (2nd)
(Hornung's Baneful Deflector)
Augment Undead (3rd)
Ground Fog (3rd)
Corpse Whisper (4th)
Eyes of the Undead (4th)
Mimic Mortal (4th)
Neverending Nightmares (4th)
Rain of Terror (4th)
Suppress Lycanthropy (4th)
Soul Anchor (5th)
Strahd's Malefic Meld (5th)
Misty Summons (7th)
Strahd's Frightful Joining (7th)
(Bloodstone's Frightful Joining)
Allisandro's Binding Curse (9th)

Priest Spells
Aura of Discomfort (Aura of Comfort) (2nd)
Zone of Deception (Zone of Truth) (2nd)
Corpse Whisper (3rd)
Eyes of the Undead (3rd)
Cloud of Putrefaction (5th)
(Cloud of Purification)
Living Ward (Undead Ward) (5th)
Tomb Ward (7th)

Wizard Spell Descriptions

Strahd's Baneful Attractor

(Evocation)
Reversible
Level: 2nd
Range: 60
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: One creature, 15-foot radius
Saving Throw: Negate

This spell is the reverse of *Hornung's baneful deflector*. Of course, the vampire Count chose to name it after himself rather than credit the upstart Hornung. It can be cast upon any creature within 60 feet. The creature gets a saving throw to negate the spell. The spell forms a hemispherical shell identical in form to the shell of *Hornung's baneful deflector*. Instead of deflecting spells directed at the target, however, it attracts them. All spells targeted at an individual within 15 feet of the victim are redirected to him. Area-effect spells are not affected. If the redirection causes the spell to exceed its range, then it travels the full distance allowed and fizzles out at the edge of its range.

The material component is a few bits of broken glass.

Augment Undead

(Necromancy)
Reversible
Level: 3rd
Range: 40 feet
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: One undead creature
Saving Throw: None

This spell augments an undead creature's saving throws and ability to resist being turned. It can only be cast upon an undead creature with at least 3 fewer Hit Dice than the caster has levels. The undead monster is then considered to be 3 Hit Dice stronger than normal for the purposes of saving throws and resisting being turned. Casting *augment undead* requires a Ravenloft powers check.

The reverse of this spell, *diminish undead*, does require the undead creature to roll a saving throw. It can be cast upon any undead, even if its level or Hit Dice exceeds the caster's level. If the saving throw fails, the undead creature saves and is turned as if it were 3 Hit Dice lower than its true value. Neither of these spells is cumulative with multiple castings.

The material component is a piece of clothing from any undead creature, such as a zombie or wight. It can be reused indefinitely.

Ground Fog

(Invocation)
Level: 3rd
Range: 0
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 10 rounds
Area of Effect: One 50x50 foot square per level
Saving Throw: none

This spell creates a ground fog or mist that rises only knee high on a normal human (about two feet). The mist fills an area defined by the spell caster, laid out as 50x50 foot tiles. The first tile must be centered on the caster. The others can be laid out in any pattern so long as every tile shares a complete border with another tile. The fog fills only the level or floor where the caster stands. It cascades down stairs and into pits, but evaporates after a few feet.

The fog is full of moving swirls and eddies. An invisible character moving through the fog does not create enough of a stir to reveal his presence. The ground is generally not visible beneath the fog. It is quite possible for a corpse to be lying on the floor and be completely covered by the fog. The material component of the spell is a pinch of lamb's fleece. A *detect magic* spell will reveal an aura of invocation.

This spell may seem innocuous, but to a

vampire like Strahd it is a deviously simple trap. The gaseous form of the vampire is indistinguishable from the fog. In effect, he can rise up out of the fog anywhere and attack with surprise. Alternatively, he can materialize lying down under the fog cover and then leap up to attack or strike at passing legs. His undead minions (skeletons, zombies, and the like) can easily do the same.

Corpse Whisper

(Necromancy)
Level: 4th
Range: 40 feet
Components: S, M
Duration: Special, up to 1 day
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: One undead creature
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the caster to transmit a message to an undead creature. The message forms silently in the mind of the corpse in the natural voice of the caster. The caster does not need to be within line of sight of the undead creature, if it is one he currently controls. The caster is not privy to the mind or thoughts of the undead creature.

The undead recipient is forced to obey only if it is not a self-willed undead (zombies and skeletons) and not under the current control of the caster. Self-willed undead can do as they please, but fear of their master may be enough to spur them into immediate obedience.

The spell establishes a link with the undead creature that enables up to half as many one-round, one-sentence messages to be sent as the caster has levels, rounded down. For example, a 9th level caster could send four messages to an undead creature that received this spell, each message requiring a single round to send and consisting of a single sentence. Even if no commands are sent, the spell wears off after a day.

Although the creature must be within 40 feet of the necromancer when the spell is cast, after that the creature can travel up to a mile away and still receive commands. As you might expect, the spell will not function if the caster and undead minion are in different domains and the borders of either domain (or any intervening domain) are closed.

The material component of this spell is the tongue of a dead man. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Eyes of the Undead

(Necromancy)
Level: 4th
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: One undead creature
Saving Throw: Negate

This spell is cast upon any dead or undead body. The body can be of any creature of size S (small) or larger. Once cast, a link is forged between the necromancer and the dead or undead body. He can see and hear anything that the corpse can see or hear. Since a dead body is not able to direct its eyes, it is unlikely that it will see much of use. However, there is no such problem with hearing. Undead creatures can direct their vision and even move around, providing a much better target for the spell.

The necromancer is not able to control the undead creature through this spell. He must rely upon the creature's orders or instincts to provide him with the appropriate views. The more self-willed and intelligent the undead, the better the chance of seeing or hearing something useful. If the undead creature is a willing servant of the necromancer, no saving throw is necessary.

Although the corpse must be within 30 feet of the necromancer when the spell is cast, afterward he can be up to one mile away and still see and hear through the undead creature. The spell ceases to work if the caster and undead are in different domains and the borders of either domain (or any intervening domain) are closed.

The material components for this spell are an eye and an ear of a dead man. Casting this spell is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Mimic Mortal

(Necromancy)
Level: 4th
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 10 rounds + 4/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: 1 lycanthrope
Saving Throw: Negate

This is a very powerful spell in the hands of a vampire wizard. The caster can cause the vampire to lose some of his vulnerabilities in exchange for some of his powers. In effect, the undead creature simulates a mortal for a short time.

The caster chooses how many vulnerabilities and powers to cancel out, but not which ones. He can choose a maximum of one vulnerability per two levels of experience. The vulnerabilities and powers are taken from the following list in order. If a particular type of undead does not have the listed vulnerability or power, skip to the next entry. In all cases, one vulnerability is sacrificed for one power. As you can tell from the list below, the least valuable vulnerabilities are sacrificed first, but the most valuable powers go with them. In general, a vampire desiring to pass himself off as human will attempt to exchange as many vulnerabilities and powers as possible.

Vulnerability	Power
Deathly Pallor *	Life Drain
Garlic	Magic weapon needed to hit
Mirrors	Charm Gaze
Invitation **	Gaseous Form
Held at Bay @	Shapechange
Running Water	Sleep, Charm, Hold, Poison, and Paralysis Immunities
Holy Water	Summon Animals
Sunlight	Supernatural Strength #
Being Turned &	Spider Climb

* Normal skin color, warm to the touch
** Can enter home without an invitation
@ With holy symbol
# Strength becomes a 15
& Also immune to damage from holy symbol

Neverending Nightmares

(Enchantment)
Level: 4th
Range: 10 feet/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: One person
Saving Throw: Negate

This spell enables the caster to subject the victim to nightmarish dreams. It can be cast upon the person at any time, but it remains dormant until the person sleeps. The saving throw is rolled secretly when the spell is cast. When he sleeps, the victim has a horrible nightmare. The exact nature of the nightmare differs from person to person, depending on the unique fears of the individual.

The victim of the nightmare awakens in a cold sweat, gasping for air and clawing at his face. After a few rounds he recovers his composure. He does not remember the nightmare in any detail, only vague, unspeakable horrors. The nightmares continue every night until the spell is broken. A simple *remove curse* will do the trick. Under the scrutiny of a *detect magic* spell, the target radiates an aura of enchantment.

After the first nightmare, the character automatically fails any future fear or horror checks. In each case, the "memory" of the nightmare comes flooding back to him. He is convinced that the nightmare predicted this scene and will result in an horrible doom for him.

The material component of this spell is a lock of hair from a black horse. Casting this spell is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Rain of Terror

(Evocation)
Level: 4th
Range: 1 mile
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 hour + 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 1-mile diameter
Saving Throw: None

This spell causes a rain storm to develop over the next 1 turns. If storm clouds are already overhead, the rain begins immediately. The rain lasts for 1 hour, plus 1 turn per level of the caster; it covers a circle 1 mile in diameter. This will cover most villages and small towns.

The caster can choose the nature of the rain, within the limits established by his level. Living creatures that rain down have a 50% chance of surviving. Therefore, after a rain of toads, half of them are alive and hopping around, the other half are dead, killed by the impact. None of the animals are dangerous or able to harm anyone.

Wizard's Level	Type of Rain
1-2	Black, putrid water
3-4	Ash
5-6	Steaming blood
7-8	Toads
9-10	Dead bats
11-12	Snakes
13+	Spiders

Suppress Lycanthropy

(Alteration)
Reversible
Level: 4th
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3 rounds/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: 1 lycanthrope
Saving Throw: Negate

This spell is both a blessing and a bane to all lycanthropes. If successful, the spell forces the lycanthrope into his human form. He retains any powers or immunities that his human form normally grants him. He is unable to change shape for the duration of the spell.

This spell can be used to give the afflicted lycanthrope a temporary reprieve from his curse. It can also be used as a combat tactic against any type of lycanthrope. Most of these shapechangers are quite helpless in their humanoid form. For these reasons it is both a blessing and a bane.

The material component of this spell is a sprig of wolfsbane.

Strahd Von Zarovich was as interested in the reverse of this spell, *induce lycanthropy*, as that was its original form. With it, he can force a lycanthrope into his animal or man-beast form. The lycanthrope is unable to shapechange again until the spell expires. Afflicted lycanthropes that are subjected to this spell adopt the bestial mindset that normally overcomes them in this form. Casting *induce lycanthropy* is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Soul Anchor

(Enchantment/Charm)
Level: 5th
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: Negate

The wizard can tie the victim's soul to a particular edifice—a building, an estate, a castle, etc.. This prevents the victim from leaving that place unless released from the spell. A simple *dispel magic* or *remove curse* will generally do the trick. If the owner of the building or estate grants permission to leave, the spell is dispelled. The owner can be charmed or otherwise forced into granting permission.

The specified place of the anchor must have clearly defined borders, such as the walls of a

castle. A grove of trees does not have a clearly definable border and hence is an unsuitable place for a soul anchor.

Strahd's Malefic Meld

(Necromancy)
Level: 5th
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: Creatures melded
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the necromancer to create an undead monster. The creature is a composite of up to three dead bodies. These parts can be from any selection of dead animals, humanoids, or monsters. The only restriction is that the creatures can span no more than two size categories. For example, a dog and an elf could be melded since one is size S and the other size M. However, a house cat and an elf could not be melded since the cat is size T, more than one size category away from the elf. Similarly, a dog, an elf and an ogre could not be melded since they are sizes S, M, and L, respectively. None of the creatures melded together can have more than 5 Hit Dice.

The advantage of the meld is that the undead monster can take various attributes from whichever of the original creatures used them best. The attribute must be associated with a particular part of the creature's body. That body part ends up in the meld. At least one attribute must be taken from each creature in the meld. The monster always has an animal Intelligence, regardless of the Intelligences of its component creatures. It is utterly loyal to its creator.

There are four attributes that are chosen through body parts: Hit Dice, armor class, movement, and attacks. The monster's Hit Dice determines its THAC0, saving throws, and turning undead value. The movement rates can be drawn from multiple creatures, so long as only one movement rate per creature per medium is selected: running, swimming, flying, burrowing, etc.

The number of attacks per round must be chosen from a single creature, but it can have attack forms from any or all of the creatures in the meld. It is quite possible for the creature to have more attack forms that it has attacks per round. Of course, the appropriate body part for the attack must exist in the meld. Most physical attacks can be retained, including poison, paralysis, web spinning, and breath weapons.

Magical or mental powers do not survive the transition into undeath. This includes gaze attacks, spellcasting, magic resistance, immunity to nonmagical weapons, spell-like abilities, a lycanthrope's cursed bite, etc. However, for each creature in the meld that has a magical or mental power, the undead creation gets one special undead power. These powers are cumulative and granted in order. The first is that a +1 weapon is needed to hit, then life level drain by touch, then 10% magic resistance. The level drain must be associated with a single form of attack, such as the claws on a claw/claw/bite sequence. Notice that only a meld of three creatures that all had magical or mental powers gives a monster with magic resistance. Among player character classes, only spellcasters and psionicists qualify as having special powers for this purpose. Other classes that can cast spells at higher levels, such as the ranger or bard, do not qualify.

One of Strahd's favorite melds is a werewolf, a large spider, and a gargoyle. Needless to say, he doesn't make very many of these. The creatures' sizes, M, S, M respectively, are all in the proper range. This foul creature uses the gargoyle's flying movement and the spider's

ground movement. Even though a werewolf is faster than the spider, he can only pick the legs on one of them and therefore cannot have web movement if he uses the lycanthrope's legs. The Hit Dice are drawn from the werewolf, which has 4+3 Hit Dice. The armor class of 5 also is taken from the gargoyle. The number of attacks (4) also comes from the gargoyle. The creature gets the werewolf's bite and the spider's poison and web-spinning ability. Because both the gargoyle and the werewolf had magical abilities, the melded creature gets the first two undead abilities of a +1 weapon needed to hit and a life-level-draining horn (Strahd's choice). Visually, the abomination has a spider's legs, a werewolf's body and head, and a gargoyle's wings and arms. In the summary below, its attacks are claw/claw/bite/horn.

Werewolf/Spider/Gargoyle Meld: AL CE; AC 5; MV 6, Fl 15 (C), Wb 15; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1d3/1d3/2d4/1d4; SA poison, webs, level drain; SD +1 weapon to hit; SZ M; ML special

The physical component for this spell is a pinch powdered doppleganger bone. Casting this spell is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Misty Summons

(Alteration/Invocation)
Level: 7th
Range: 1 mile/level
Components: V, S
Duration: 10 rounds/level
Casting Time: 7 rounds
Area of Effect: 30-foot radius
Saving Throw: None

This spell requires a special portal to be built prior to the casting. This portal is a doorway or archway of stone. It must be at least three feet wide and no more than 30 feet wide. The materials to build it cost 3,000 gold pieces and the labor takes six months. All the labor must be performed by the caster. Once built, it looks like any normal doorway or arch.

When casting the spell, the wizard visualizes a place he knows well. It must be within the range of the spell and in the same domain as the caster. The caster must be within 30 feet of the portal. Over the next 7 rounds, a misty fog coalesces at distant that place and within the portal. Once the fog has been created, the caster no longer needs to concentrate on it. He can dispel it at any time, but he cannot change its position.

The fog is magical, with an aura of alteration and invocation. If cast upon an area of normal fog, this fog is indistinguishable from the normal fog and can only be detected magically. Woe be to the enemy of Strahd who walks the lands of Barovia when the fog comes rolling in.

Any creature stepping into the mists walks out of it through the portal. Anyone seeing the mist forming may of course choose to not step into it. If it is created over them, they have 7 rounds to walk away. If they are sleeping or otherwise immobile, they are transported as is to the misty portal.

Count Von Zarovich has a misty portal somewhere in his castle. Its exact location is unknown. With it, he can summon people to his castle at any time. Once there, they rarely return.

Strahd's Frightful Joining

(Necromancy)
Reversible
Level: 7th
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Negate and Special

This spell is the reverse of *Bloodstone's frightful joining*. The original spell enables the caster to merge his mind with the body of an undead creature. This spell enables an undead creature, such as a vampire or lich, to merge its mind with the body of a living person. Since Strahd Von Zarovich is a vampire, this variation is much more useful to him than Bloodstone's original spell.

The target of the spell must be a living, intelligent humanoid. If the target is not a human or demihuman, then it gets a +2 bonus to the saving throw. Goblins, ogres, and werewolves are good examples of humanoids that get this bonus. If the saving throw succeeds, the undead mage is forced back into its original body. No system shock roll is necessary.

If the target's saving throw fails, the undead wizard joins its mind to the target's body. While in the creature's body, the caster can use all of its special abilities except memorized spells. The wizard's undead body remains lifeless and is vulnerable to attack. Once in the target's body, the wizard can travel any distance, so long as it remains in the same domain as its true body.

Once in the body, the undead monster's mind is open to the target's mind, filling it with ghastly thoughts. Once an hour, at the beginning of that time period, the mortal target must roll an madness check. Failure means that the undead mage's mind has overcome that of its victim. No further checks are necessary and the undead wizard can remain in control of its mortal victim effortlessly for the duration of the spell. A successful madness check means that the undead mage must roll a saving throw vs. death to remain in control of the body. If it succeeds, the mental battle goes on. If it fails, the undead creature's mind is cast from the body and the victim regains control. However, even if the target successfully ejects the undead mage from his body, he must roll a horror check. While still sane, the horror of the memory is quite vivid.

One interesting side effect of *Strahd's frightful joining* is that while in the mortal body, he can do things that he cannot do in a vampiric body. For example, he can walk in the sunlight, enter homes uninvited, see his reflection in a mirror, etc. For Strahd, this spell can have very potent ramifications. Of course his victim is likely to be a raving lunatic when the dark lord is through with him, but Strahd cares little about that.

Allisandro's Binding Curse

(Alteration, Necromancy)
Level: 9th
Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 3 Hours
Area of Effect: 1 Creature
Saving Throw: None

This loathsome spell was created by Allisandro Tselikov, a member of the proud Vistani, several hundred years ago. When the other members of his tribe learned that he had been delving into the dark secrets of necromancy and attempting to harness dark powers, they cast him out. He wandered, alone and broken, eventually becoming the first of Ravenloft's darklings (see the *Monstrous Compendium, RAVENLOFT® Appendix*). In his isolation, he returned to the research that he had been forced to abandon. Eventually he crafted this spell to exact revenge upon the Vistani for the wrong he felt they had done him.

In many ways, this spell is an improved version of the *permanency* spell that is designed to be used in the laying of curses. It permits the caster to weave a normally temporary spell upon an individual and make it permanent. In order to cast this spell, the wizard must have some portion of the target's body. This can range from a lock of hair or nail clippings to a severed finger or limb. The spell is long and involved, requiring three hours to cast. It is highly symbolic and involves a great deal of ritual and ceremony. The wizard must have at least two assistants who aid him in the weaving of this dark magic. Neither of them can be under any form of compulsion (such as a threat or magical *charm*) and both must be fully aware of the act that they are involved in. The assistants need not be spellcasters themselves.

At the end of the casting period, the material component is thrown into a brazier of hot coals where it is utterly consumed in a flash of sickly light and a boiling cloud of vile-smelling vapor. At that instant, the caster devotes a portion of his own life force to the spell, causing him to be drained of 1 point of Constitution, permanently.

There is no linear limit to the range of this curse, but it cannot affect someone outside of the domain in which it was cast. If used outside of the demiplane of dread, the victim can be anywhere in the same plane of existence. Of course casting such a vengeful spell is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

The spells that it can be used in conjunction with are *anti-magic shell, babble, bestow curse, claws of the umber hulk, confuse languages, contagion, emotion, enervation, enlarge, feign death, feign undead, fist of stone, insatiable thirst, irritation, levitate, lower resistance, Malec-Keth's flame fist, neverending nightmare, Otto's irresistible dance, reduce, suggestion, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*, and *unluck*. The wizard must actually cast this associated spell during the casting of *Allisandro's binding curse*. None of these spells can actually harm the victim because they are a part of him. For example, *Otto's irresistible dance* does not produce fatigue, nor does it prevent the character from sleeping (although he will present an odd sight dancing in his sleep). *Malec-Keth's flame fist* will not burn the character's fist, but could harm him if he tries to scratch an itch.

Removing this spell is almost impossible. A *limited wish* spell will dispel the effects for one day per level of the caster. Only a full *wish* spell can eliminate *Allisandro's binding curse*.

Priest Spell Descriptions

Aura of Discomfort

(Evocation)
Reversible
Sphere: Travelers
Level: 2nd
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

This spell is the reverse of *aura of comfort*. It is used by evil priests as a form of mild curse. The victim is subjected to an uncomfortable environment for the duration of the spell. The caster can pick the temperature in any range from -20 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. He can also select a weather effect, such as rain, sleet, or snow, for the target to feel. The effect is not visible to anyone, including the target. However, he feels the effects and suffers the results.

The target is only slightly hampered by the spell. He can move and fight normally, but he suffers a -1 penalty to all actions that require a die roll for success. This includes attacks, saving throws, and ability checks. The character may find that he has to dress for how he feels rather than to match the actual conditions. A person dressed in just a loin cloth for the jungle could actually suffer frostbite as a result of this spell unless he dresses warmly.

Zone of Deception

(Enchantment/Charm)
Reversible
Sphere: Wards
Level: 2nd
Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: 5-foot square/level
Saving Throw: Negate

This is the reverse of the *zone of truth* spell. Like the original version, the *zone of deception* allows a saving throw to avoid the effects. Everyone affected within the area of effect knows immediately that they may speak only lies. What they say and how they say it is up to them, but every statement must be a lie. Questions are not statements, and therefore are not affected. The same is true of suppositions and exclamations. The game master should carefully examine every statement to see if it is true, false, or an exception to the spell. For example, the statement "I can only lie" is a true statement under the influence of this spell and therefore cannot be spoken.

Corpse Whisper

(Necromancy)
Sphere: Necromantic
Level: 3rd
Range: 60 feet
Components: S, M
Duration: Special, up to 1 day
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: One undead creature
Saving Throw: None

This spell is the same as the wizard spell of the same name. The only differences are the level and range as noted above.

Eyes of the Undead

(Necromancy)
Sphere: Necromantic
Level: 3rd
Range: 40 feet
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 hours/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: One undead creature
Saving Throw: Negate

This spell is the same as the wizard spell of the same name. The only differences are the level, range and duration as noted above.

Cloud of Putrefaction

(Evocation)
Reversible
Sphere: Elemental Air, Water
Level: 5th
Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: 20-foot cube
Saving Throw: None

This spell is the reverse of *cloud of purification*. It creates a billowy cloud of vile vapors the moves in the direction of the prevailing wind, at a rate of 20 feet per round. A strong wind breaks it up in 4 rounds, and a greater wind (*gust of wind* spell, for example) disperses it in 1 round. Thick vegetation also makes the cloud dissipate.

The cloud transmutes pure water into organic filth and rotting garbage. Small animals (mice, squirrels, etc.) are polymorphed into rats and rot grubs. Flies and other foul insects immediately rise up from the mess. If it is cast over a sewer or garbage heap, it doubles the size of the filth. The cloud lasts for only 1 round per level, but the effects of the spell are permanent. This spell is perfect for spoiling a castle's water supply or fouling a small river or spring.

Living Ward

(Abjuration, Necromancy)
Reversible
Sphere: Wards
Level: 5th
Range: Special
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 2 turns
Area of Effect: 5-foot cube/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell is the reverse of the *undead ward* spell. It prevents any intelligent, living humanoid from entering the area of effect. Animals and non-humanoid monsters aren't even aware of the ward. The caster can protect a cube whose sides are five feet long per level of the caster. For example, a 15th-level caster can create a protected cube 75 feet on a side.

Any living, humanoid creature attempting to enter the area of the spell is "turned" as if it were an undead monster. Use the turning undead chart found in the RAVENLOFT® rules set. The character's level, or the humanoid's Hit Dice, is used to find the appropriate row. In Ravenloft, the level of turning is equal to the caster's level. This is far better than the reverse of the spell, in which the level of the turning is two levels less than the caster's level.

In any given round, the spell can affect only the normal 2d6 worth of living creatures, just like the turning undead rule. The affected creatures are never destroyed, even if the die roll produces that result. They are merely forced back out of the warded area. Only one attempt can be made to enter the ward. Living creatures within the area of effect when the spell is cast are unaffected. However, should they ever leave, they might not be able to get back in.

This spell can be cast by a normal, living priest, since living creatures within the ward at the time of casting are unaffected. However, it is particularly effective when used by undead creatures. Strahd Von Zarovich has a high-level priest minion able to cast this spell for him should he ever need it. The same is true for Azalin. Being undead, both of these dark lords are immune to the spell effects.

Tomb Ward

(Abjuration)
Sphere: Wards
Level: 7th
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 day
Area of Effect: 1 tomb, a cube 30 feet/side
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the priest to cast a conditional curse upon a tomb. This is the ultimate form of protection for a burial place. Anyone violating the tomb becomes subject to the curse. At one point during the casting of this spell, the priest must cast a *divine curse* spell, which actually defines the curse.

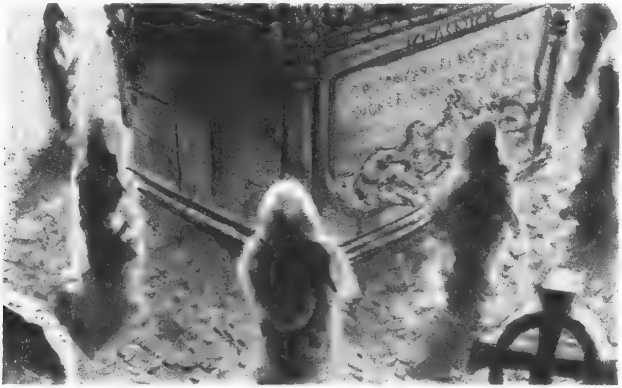
It takes a full day to cast this spell. The priest cannot be interrupted at any time during that day. He must walk through all the passages and rooms of the tomb, marking the walls, floors, ceilings, doors, etc. with signs of the curse.

During this time, the priest sets down the exact conditions that will trigger the *divine curse*. They can be as simple as "any creature entering this tomb," or as complicated as "any mortal disturbing the remains of the king, removing his burial treasure, breaking or destroying his possessions, or defacing the tomb...."

Interpreting the curse is up to the game master. In general, the wording of the curse should be interpreted literally. Vague and unclear passages should be given an unfavorable interpretation.

The priest has a limit to the size of tomb he can ward. It must fill an area no larger than a cube 30 feet on a side. If he is assisted by other priests, however, each additional priest adds 10 feet to each side of the cube. The level of these supporting priests is irrelevant. Therefore seven priests can ward a tomb that is no larger than a cube 90 feet on a side.

The material components of this spell are a holy symbol from each priest involved. The symbols must be left in the tomb, frequently buried in the walls or floor. Optionally, a creature of the same race as the priest can be sacrificed instead of a holy symbol. Obviously only evil priests would do this. Such an act requires a Ravenloft powers check.



There a few new magical items that have been created or discovered in Ravenloft. It is unclear what effects, if any, will occur if these items are removed from the demiplane. Some may function normally, while others might cease to be magical at all. What is known is that each bears the unique stamp of treacherous evil that insinuates itself into everything in Ravenloft.

Finger of Commanding

This item looks like a simple finger bone with jeweled knuckles. It radiates an aura of summoning. When the proper command word is spoken, it enables the holder to raise and command up to 6 Hit Dice of zombies or skeletons. The bodies must be normal corpses. This item does not usurp control over existing zombies or skeletons. The effects last for 1 hour. It can only be used once a day. Using this magical item is call for a Ravenloft powers check.

Mirror of Reflecting

This magical mirror shows the true appearance of anything reflected in it. It parts the veils of illusion and invisibility, but it does not otherwise reveal magical effects. It radiates an aura of alteration. The mirror can be of any size, but is usually about three feet by five feet. Strahd is particularly fond of this magical item because it will show his reflection, even though he is a vampire. It does not reveal his undead nature and would not reveal the existence of any magical spells that might be affecting him.

Zombie Blood

This horrid potion can turn a normal person into a zombie for 1d4 + 1 days. It is colorless, odorless, and tasteless, making it easy to slip into food or drink. The potion can be attuned to a single master if that person stirs the potion with his finger prior to giving it to his victim. Once consumed, the person becomes mentally like a zombie. His body is still alive, but he does nothing without explicit orders. If the potion was stirred, then the zombie obeys only that person. Otherwise the new zombie obeys any order. The victim does not even eat or sleep unless commanded. He cannot feel pain and is immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells, just like a zombie.

In combat, he retains his hit points and saving throw values, but his THAC0, damage, etc. are the same as a normal zombie. He is still affected by physical damage and even poison. The person can be turned just like a zombie, but he cannot be destroyed. If the turning attempt would destroy a normal zombie, the effects of the potion are negated immediately. Knowingly using this potion is cause for a Ravenloft powers check.

Spear +1, Heartseeker

This unusual wooden spear is carved from a single piece of ash. The tip is carved right onto the shaft and is obviously also wooden. It radiates an aura of enchantment. As a normal weapon, it has a +1 enchantment and inflicts normal damage despite the apparent frailty of its tip. When used against a vampire, it is always capable of causing damage if the attack roll is successful, even if the vampire is immune to +1 weapons. Any successful hit on a vampire is to the heart, effectively driving the shaft through as if it were a stake. The vampire is then pinned according to the normal rules for vampires. If the spear is removed without first destroying the body, the vampire is restored and begins to regenerate.

Wolfspaw

This item seems like a simple peasant charm. It is a wolf's paw stuffed with wolfsbane. There is a leather thong of suitable length for hanging it around a person's neck. The bearer of this charm radiates a ten-foot-wide circle of protection that prevents all wolves, dogs, or other canine species from entering. Vampires in wolf form, werewolves in wolf or wolfman form, and even gnolls are kept at bay.

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Ravenloft

Boxed Set

Oaths of Evil

An Account of the Roads to Darkness

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Credits

Design: Bruce Nesmith
Editing: Mike Breault
Box Cover Art: Clyde Caldwell
Booklet Cover Art: Stephen Fabian
Interior Art: Stephen Fabian and Bob Klasnich
Cartography: David C. Sutherland III and Dennis Kauth
Graphic Design: Roy E. Parker
Typography: Tracey Zamagne

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TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

INTRODUCTION

This book has it roots in the most basic element of the RAVENLOFT® game world: The player. At many gaming conventions, we heard people telling us what they liked and didn't like about Ravenloft. This book is dedicated, with our thanks, to all the folks who attend gaming conventions and tell us what we do wrong.

One comment that we heard quite frequently was that curses were very interesting and excited a lot of Dungeon Masters. However, we also heard that they were difficult to incorporate into games. The guidelines presented in the original box did a fine job of conveying the flavor that we meant curses to have, but they didn't go far enough into the game mechanics and the thoughts behind them.

There are three major sections in this book. The first is an expansion of the material on curses presented in the RAVENLOFT boxed set. Before reading this section, it's a good idea to read over the material on curses presented in that product.

The second section is an expansion of the rules governing Ravenloft powers checks. To our minds, these are simply another form of curse. In addition, we've also had a lot of requests for more information about these frightful tests of the dark powers. This section ought to answer most of the questions that people asked us at conventions and possibly a few that we never formally asked.

The final section of this book deals with cursed objects. These are all magical items that have some manner of evil about them. We've even tossed in an artifact, the *timepiece of Klorr*, that is among the most vile and dark things ever presented for the AD&D® game.

CURSES

Saying a curse upon another individual is not a small matter in the dark land of Ravenloft. It serves to invoke the energies of the dark powers themselves, and that is something too horrible for most people to even consider. Still, there are those who are drawn or pushed to that choice by either their own weakness or the wrongs that another does to them.

Types of Curses

There are three basic types of curses in Ravenloft, each horrible in its own way. Curiously, the most minor of these are the traditional magical curses from the AD&D® game.

Spellcasters' Curses

This type of curse is the most common, and least powerful, of the three. It includes such things as the *quest*, *geas*, and certain uses of the *wish* and *limited wish* spells. The lower-level spell *bestow curse* is too insignificant to count as a curse in Ravenloft. A complete listing of the spells from the *Player's Handbook*, the *Tome of Magic*, and the original RAVENLOFT® boxed set that count as curses is provided for ease of reference:

Quest (Pr 5)
Divine Curse (Pr 6)
Geas (Wz 6)
Ancient Curse (Pr 7)
Limited Wish (Wz 7)
Wish (Wz 9)

In addition, the *Nova Arcanum* book, included with this box, lists a 9th-level spell called *Allisandro's Binding Curse*. This is a truly powerful spell that greatly increases the ability of a spellcaster to invoke powerful and lasting curses, ones that will rival the greatest curses fashioned by anyone within the mists of Ravenloft.

There are many other spells that might be considered curses in Ravenloft. Examples of such spells might include *polymorph other*, *feeblemind*, and similar spells of a negative and permanent nature. Into this category falls the case of a hag who transforms a handsome prince who rejects her advances into a loathsome toad.

The decision of whether or not a spell is being used as a curse is up to the Dungeon Master. Of course, if the player states that this is his intention, then by all means consider the casting to be a cursing instead. If the player denies that this is his desire, but the DM™ feels otherwise, then the final word is clearly the Dungeon Master's. The guidelines given in the section entitled "Use of Curses by PCs" should be consulted before any player character is allowed to invoke these powerful magics.

To expand upon the information presented in the original Ravenloft boxed set, it should be noted that those who hold a cursed object fall into this category. In such cases, the curse can be quite severe and all but unescapable.

Of course, some cursed objects hardly rate mentioning in Ravenloft. The holder of a *sword −1* has no right to complain about this minor curse that reduces his chances to hit an enemy in combat by a petty 5%. Even someone wearing a *ring of contrariness* is really quite fortunate when compared to some of the more severe curse victims found in Ravenloft.

Self-Induced Curses

This is a fairly traditional way of earning one's self a curse. It includes all manner of curses brought about by the inner desires and lusts of the individual. No outside agent is responsible for what has happened to the cursed person—he has only himself to blame.

Examples of this type of curse include people like Strahd Von Zarovich, who hungered so for eternal life that he sacrificed his own brother and drove the woman that he loved to death. He was "rewarded" with a transformation into an undying vampire lord, but he was cursed to suffer eternally for the things that he had done to attain

his *unlife*. It is said that no man in Ravenloft bears a heavier curse than that of Strahd.

Self-induced curses are some of the most interesting, and they can be used to spice up many adventures. They can transform an otherwise drab and lifeless NPC into an individual that the players will long remember. Perhaps the best examples of this type of curse can be found in the writings of Edgar Allen Poe and on numerous episodes of such classic television shows as *The Twilight Zone* or *Night Gallery*.

There are really two types of self-induced curses. One is the reward (punishment, actually) for a life lived poorly. A man who spends his time hoarding coins in his counting house and taking advantage of the unfortunate to strip them of their meager possessions might well end up wearing the heavy chains of a curse. This is a common origin for ghosts and similar creatures.

The second type of self-induced curse is manifested from a single act of evil or darkness that is so vile that it earns the attention of the dark powers or some supernatural being. In Ravenloft, such a curse may be invoked simply by violating sacred chambers and undertaking acts like grave robbing. In Har'Akir, for example, one of the easiest ways to become cursed is to violate one of the tombs that house the mummified remains of the pharaohs. Similar acts in other domains might well be enough to bring down a curse that may linger for days, weeks, years, or even generations. This type of curse can even fall upon the most innocent and kind people as a misunderstanding of sorts.

Curses of Vengeance

This is the most traditional type of curse. It falls upon someone who has wronged another so greatly that his victim's hatred and anger is given form by the mists of Ravenloft, and a curse descends to drape the offender in a shroud of evil. This is also commonly called the *gypsy's curse*, as the Vistani are noted for their ability to invoke these dark and sinister magics.

This sort of curse is used to great effectiveness in countless stories, from fairy tales such as *Beauty and the Beast* to the works of modern horror authors such as Stephen King. Similarly, they can be very useful to Dungeon Masters of the RAVENLOFT® game.

The most common form of this type of curse is well known to all. A man is convicted of a murder he did not commit, for example, and sentenced to be hanged. On the gallows, he points out the man who framed him for the crime and issues a scalding condemnation of the fiend and his dark act. Few will feel pity for the true criminal when he gradually begins to suffer from a serious of mysterious calamities.

A curse of this nature can also be laid upon someone by an enemy who sees his own defeat as a great wrong. As we'll see, the important factor in weaving a curse is not whether a wrong act has been done, but whether the victim *perceives* that he has been wronged. Curses of this type, then, make a great "parting shot" for a villain on the edge of utter defeat.

Consider a group of adventurers that has driven a dark necromancer to the edge of a volcanic precipice and is about to force him into the fires and end his reign of terror. Just as a gleaming obsidian tipped arrow sinks into the fiend's chest and he starts to topple backward, he might issue a deadly curse on the heroes who bested him. Were the adventurers right to destroy the foul necromancer? Certainly. But not in the mind of their opponent. To him, they were meddlesome travelers who had no right to interfere with his plans. It's all a matter of perceptions.

Similarly, these curses can be employed by those who feel that they have been wronged when no actual slight was intended. A beautiful woman who feels that her younger sister is blossoming into a splendor finer than she might view this as an act of calculated evil. If her sister knew her place, she would dress more plainly and spend more time praising the beauty of her sibling. The younger girl might have no idea that her sister feels this way. Indeed, she might even be attempting to model herself after her older sibling, whom she sees as far more attractive than she could ever be.

Nonetheless, if the older girl decides that she has been wronged, her own wrath is often enough to give power to the curse and shape to her anger. These are perhaps the darkest of curses, for they are cast upon the innocent.

Designing a Curse

One of the elements stressed in RAVENLOFT® campaigns is uniqueness. For instance, each monster that the heroes battle should be unique. This can be as simple as describing the fiend in some slightly deceptive way, to hide its true nature, or giving it unusual powers that other member of its race don't share. However this is done, it makes the players uncertain about the magnitude of the foe their characters are facing, and it gives them a feeling of doubt about their ability to overcome it. This promotes the higher level of suspense and role-playing so vital to a good RAVENLOFT game adventure.

This same advice carries over into curses: make each one different. Customize each curse so that it matches the personality of the character that it is targeted against. Consider the importance of the player running that character too. His own likes and dislikes can be very useful in designing a curse. If the Dungeon Master knows that Jon (the player) has a fascination with ancient books and history, he can use this information to improve the impact of a curse. Suppose that every book or scroll Jon's character touched were to wither into ash. If Jon happened to be a cat fancier, then it might be that all such animals would hiss and snarl in his presence. Sure, this is hitting below the belt, but that's what curses are all about.

The RAVENLOFT boxed set lists seven basic factors that must be carefully considered when creating a new curse or defining the abilities of an old one. Each of these was discussed briefly in the original boxed set. Here, we'll go into far greater detail and examine some precise rules for the design and use of curses. In addition, a few more considerations will be presented and detailed.

Wording a Curse

An important element in laying a curse is the manner in which it is invoked. Consider the example of a peasant who has been beaten by an evil, high-level warrior. If the victim simply says "I curse your sword arm!" he isn't going to add much to the flavor of a game set in the demiplane of dread. This is reflected in a reduced chance that the curse will take effect.

On the other hand, a truly imaginative and spiteful curse can do wonders to increase the tension and mood. Because of this, those who employ such eloquent enchantments find that the chances of success for their curses are greatly enhanced. Consider our poor, beaten peasant. Suppose that he whirled about, pointed a long, bony finger at the towering knight, and declared:

By the blackness of the night,
Never more shall your sword bite.
Weakened be the hand that holds it.
Darkness comes now to enfold it.

Now there's a curse. The intent is clear, and as you'll see when we move on, it does many of the important things that a curse must do. If curses are shrouded in this sort of dark and macabre atmosphere, they'll make every aspect of the game associated with them far more enjoyable and theatrical. In fact, Dungeon Masters will want to consider the wording of a curse just as much as the justification for invoking it.

It is important to keep the wording of a curse in tune with the adventure. Some people phrase their curses in poetic verse, like the one presented above; such a flowery curse would hardly be fitting to bestial madman or an uneducated brute.

Never Mention Game Mechanics

This was discussed in the original boxed set as an important element of the theatrical atmosphere of a RAVENLOFT game. While

curses almost always have a direct effect in terms of the numbers and statistics that form the core of any AD&D® game adventure, this element must be disguised in the demiplane of dread.

Consider the peasant's curse again. He is clearly intending to reduce the warrior's ability to wield his sword in combat. Thus, the DM might decide that the knight will now suffer a −4 penalty to all attack rolls that he makes. This need never be said, for the dark and ominous wording of the curse makes its effect clear.

This prohibition can logically apply to all aspects of a RAVENLOFT® game. Indeed, it is good advice to consider when playing any role-playing game. The less frequently numbers and *game-speak* get tossed around, the more exciting and intense the game session will be.

Of course, some numbers are fairly unavoidable. If a player decides that his character will swing his battle axe at a rampaging werewolf, he has to tell the Dungeon Master how many points of damage were inflicted by the blow. Still, these necessary terms can be couched in drama. Instead of saying "Fenix swings and hits for 9 points of damage," a creative player will say "Fenix swings his gleaming battle axe in a mighty arc, cutting deep into the werewolf's flesh and inflicting 9 points of damage."

This may seem like a little point, but all of these minor things add up to make for a truly enjoyable game.

Avoid Broad Prohibitions

This element is similar to the first in some ways, but it is important enough to merit a more in-depth examination. In simple terms, this means that an action should not be outlawed by a curse. Instead, it should be regulated by it. That is, punish the desired action, but still allow it to be done.

For example, in the curse presented earlier the peasant could have worded it differently, simply saying that the offending knight could never fight again. Such a sweeping restriction, however, would utterly change the brute's life without actually punishing him in the best way.

Curses should certainly be targeted against an offender in a manner that reflects the nature of the wrong committed, but the effects should be far more exacting than a simple and broad prohibition. A curse worded in this way allows the offender to continue taking the actions that he has in the past, but punishes him for each transgression. This is far more insidious and colorful.

Make Sure the Curse is Founded

When is it possible to invoke a curse? Well, if you're a spellcaster, it can be done just about any time, if the proper magics have been memorized. For others, the circumstances must be right.

For those not wielding magic, situations must warrant laying a curse. Generally, this means that a great wrong must have been done (or perceived).

There are a number of factors that contribute to a person's ability to invoke a curse in the demiplane of dread. Among the most important are the emotion of the victim and the degree of harm done by the person to be cursed. Other elements are important too, and they'll be discussed in the text that follows. See the table on page 13 for guidelines to assign chances of a curse taking effect.

Justification: This aspect of a curse rates the degree of wrong done to the person invoking the curse, the actual perceived importance of the act in the victim's eyes, and the frequency with which someone makes use of such dark means of revenge. There are several categories into which a person's "right" to throw a curse falls:

Unjustified curses are those that are cast without cause. They are tossed off without much forethought and with very little reason. Spellcasters who are too quick to weave their mystical enchantments over any minor slight will soon find that nearly all of their curses fall into this category. Such curses have a very low chance of actually taking effect.

Justified curses are those that have a fair

reason to be cast. If someone finds out that the neighbors have been stealing her best silver and then laughing about it behind her back for many years, she might decide to curse these folks. This is certainly justified, for she has been wronged. These curses are more effective than unjustified ones, but still have a fair chance of failing when invoked.

Highly justified curses are those that are cast in response to a great wrong or threat. Someone who has been badly trampled by a careless rider's thundering horse might well reach into the darkest parts of his mind to draw forth a curse of vengeance in his last seconds of life. The chance that a highly justified curse will be effective is very good.

Emotional Content: The mental state of a person invoking a curse is critical to the final effect that it will have. A woman who is enraged and heartbroken that her son has died because of the incompetence of a physician will be able to unleash a highly effective curse. Her soul is torn apart by the torment and hatred that ignite within her. Whether the physician truly was inept is not important at this point; all that matters is the perception of the woman. There are three categories into which emotional content can be split.

Normal emotional states are seldom productive when it comes to the bewitching power of a curse. Anyone who is still in complete control of his mental faculties is seldom able to generate the emotional power needed to bring on a mighty curse. Only those of a most passionate and fiery nature are able to weave an enchantment in this state.

Charged emotional states are those that involve a wrong that is sensed by the rational mind. States of extreme anger or hatred, as opposed to outright bestial rage, mark this condition. Curses cast by those in this frame of mind are somewhat less effective than those invoked by someone who is highly charged. Still, they stand a fair chance of taking effect. A man who has been wrongly accused of a crime by a crooked sheriff trying to cover his own misdeeds might easily fall into this category.

Highly charged emotional states are by far the most effective for unleashing a curse. The animal passions and primitive emotions that mark such a mood drive out rational thought, giving control over the body to a frenzy of bestial fervor. Such a base personality is more able to make contact with the darkness that infuses Ravenloft and to bend the powers of the demiplane of dread to his own desires. A woman who has been betrayed by a man who professed to love her for many years and now leaves her standing at the altar might well fall into this category. Similarly, a parent mourning the loss of a child might easily be in a highly charged emotional state.

Additional Considerations: There are many things that may make a curse more or less effective. Each of these should be considered, but none of them is nearly as important as the emotional state of the wronged person or the justification behind the curse. Let those factors be the general guide, and consider all others as tangential at best.

Background: Some people are more adept at bringing about curses than others. There are many facets to be considered in this matter.

The Vistani are noted for having great power to curse those who wrong them. Seldom, if ever, does a curse laid by a Vistani fail to take hold. By the same token, the outcast darklings (see the *Monstrous Compendium*, RAVENLOFT® Appendix) are renowned as great curse weavers, though not of the same power as their distant kindred.

Natives of Ravenloft are better at curses than travelers from other lands who have been drawn into the domains and are seeking escape. In general, the more closely a person is tied to the demiplane of dread, the more likely it is that his attempts at cursing will succeed.

The age of the person speaking the curse seems to have no impact on the chances of it taking hold, although his or her sex does. Females seem to be slightly better at invoking the wrath of fate than males, for reasons unknown to science or magic. Tradition says that this reflects the emotional nature of a

woman's heart, but none can say for sure.

Character Type: Those who are familiar with magic, be they mighty or lowly, have a better ability to curse than those who have no use for such arcane crafts. Surprisingly, however, this has only a minimal effect on the curse's chance of taking hold. A familiarity with magic is useful, but hardly necessary. Far more important are the two major elements discussed earlier in this chapter: justification and emotional content.

Alignment: Another consideration is the alignment of the person laying the curse. Those of evil or chaotic alignments have a slightly better chance of unleashing an effective curse than those of good or lawful natures. Again, this consideration pales in comparison with the first two considerations of emotion and justification.

Drama: Lastly, the conditions under which the curse is cast should be taken into account. Some times and places are particularly well suited to curses. A curse laid by someone on his deathbed is generally more dramatic (and therefore more effective) than one laid over a nice cup of tea. An invocation made in a graveyard or an evil temple is certainly going to have a greater impact than one voiced in a dining room. Speaking a curse from the top of a battlement at stroke of midnight during the most intense moment of a tremendous thunderstorm is certainly better that pronouncing it on a lazy summer day.

Tailor the Curse

One of the most satisfying things about curses is that they can be made to fit the crime. If a curse is to be truly effective, it must touch its victim in a personal and emotional way. Whenever its effect is felt, the victim must be reminded of his misdeeds, be they real or imagined. The hardship that the curse brings upon him should be a painful thorn in his side.

In the RAVENLOFT® boxed set, mention was made of poetic justice. This concept is crucial to designing an effective curse. Think of Dante's classic *Inferno* and you'll have exactly the right sense of what to do with a curse. The punishment must fit not only the person doing the deed, but also the deed itself.

If a curse is well tailored, it will be far more effective in role-playing. With a little imagination and effort, such things can make for a truly memorable game session or an outstanding NPC.

Consider the curse presented earlier in this chapter. We know the background behind the scene—a cruel knight has just beaten a fairly defenseless peasant. While this is a wholly unchivalrous act in the first place, let's speculate that the beating was delivered out of a love for brutality and not because of some wrong done by the peasant. For the sake of example, we'll say that the peasant happened to stumble and bump into the knight's horse while it was tied outside of a blacksmith's shop. So now we have a solid reason for the curse to be laid down and a few elements of background to consider as well. As a final element, let's assume that the knight, after beating the peasant, raises his sword and kills him as a twisted lesson to all those watching. The peasant lingers just long enough to voice his curse, and then dies.

By the blackness of the night,
Never more shall your sword bite.
Weakened be the hand that holds it,
Darkness comes now to enfold it.

Examining this verse in the light of tailoring it, we see that it does very well. It targets the knight's personality by weakening the value of his sword in combat. Had the offender been a priest, this would hardly have been appropriate. By the same token, it punishes the act of murder by relating the curse to the type of weapon employed. A curse relating to the knight's wealth or position would have been less worthy. The scene is certainly dramatic enough—a dying man hissing out a curse with his last breath, and the curse is clearly both justified and backed by strong emotion. Once again, our example passes muster easily.

Define Constant or Triggered Effects

There are generally two types of curses. One produces a continual effect that constantly hampers the character in his daily life. Generally, these curses are less intense, but more obvious to the outside world. The other variety of curse lays dormant until someone takes some action or until the victim is in a certain situation. When this trigger occurs, the curse takes effect. Sometimes, the dividing line between these two types of curses is vague.

Constant Curses: This type of curse is a part of the victim's daily life. Someone who has been endowed with horrible body odor would be suffering from a constant curse, as would the handsome prince who has been transformed into a frog. A general rule, and there are certainly many exceptions, is that these types of curses are somewhat less dramatic in game effect than triggered curses. Obviously, being changed into a frog has a pretty big impact on the handsome prince's life, but so extreme a curse is indeed uncommon.

If the peasant's curse that was presented earlier was worded differently, it might well be taken as a constant curse. Suppose, for example, that it was presented in this way:

By the blackness of the night,
Gone forever is your might.
Weakened be your mortal frame,
With these words your strength I claim.

Such a curse might well be taken, in game terms, as a reduction in the knight's Strength score. The actual numeric loss would be up to the DM, but 4 points should be the upper limit.

Triggered Curses: These curses are often far more dramatic in their effects than constant curses. The peasant's curse we've used as an example throughout this chapter falls into this category. With that curse, the knight is perfectly normal until he seeks to use his blade in combat. At that point, his sword arm becomes feeble, greatly reducing his effectiveness and prestige as a warrior. While mention has been made that, as a constant curse, this might reduce his Strength by perhaps 4 points, as a triggered curse it would have far more impact. It might even cause his ability score to plunge to 3 when he strikes with his sword. Such a reduction in his chances of hitting a foe and the damage that he would inflict would certainly remind him of the poor peasant that he so wrongfully killed.

Include an Escape Clause

One of the best ways to use curses in an adventure is to have someone seeking to be rid of this supernatural burden. If this is an NPC, the effect and drama are conveyed second hand. If, however, the victim of the curse is a PC, the quest becomes far more important and personal. In either case, the adventure can be highly enjoyable and rewarding if handled properly. For the purposes of classification, escape clauses are split into two distinct types.

Avoidance: Perhaps the easiest way for someone to be rid of a curse is to simply shut out the action that triggers it. Sometimes, this is easy to do. The cruel knight might be able to avoid the curse just by using a mace in combat instead of a sword. Ordinarily, this might not be a very big sacrifice. Suppose, however, that the blade he was forced to spurn was a family heirloom or greatly enchanted. It is, thus, often possible to avoid a curse without actually being free of its effects.

It is even possible, in some cases, to avoid the main impact of a constant curse. A vain prince who has been rendered horribly ugly by the curse of a rejected lover might be forced to resort to wearing a mask at all times. This might allow him to continue dealing with the world in a better fashion than he might otherwise be able, but it doesn't actually eliminate the curse.

Redemption: It is possible to be free of a curse

forever by performing a certain act or by suffering for a certain time. In the original boxed set, this type of escape was called a "cure." Upon reflection, however, it seems that *redemption* might be a better word.

The way in which a cursed person frees himself of the affliction that he bears must be related to the act that brought about the curse in the first place. Further, it must be a part of the curse itself. Suppose that the peasant's curse was again worded differently:

You bring the blackness of the night,
Your heart is evil, full of spite,
Until some fair amends you make,
Each sword you wield shall surely break.

This curse could be avoided, certainly, in the manner discussed earlier. If the knight refused to use a sword in combat, he ought to be free of its effects. Again, of course, if his weapon had some unusual property, this might not be a pleasant option.

The wording of this curse, however, allows the knight to escape the peasant's wrath completely by mending his evil ways. If he becomes fair and just, he will again be able to wield his favorite weapon with power and dignity. Of course, he might be unable to change his nature, but that is up to him. The best curse will act as a corrective measure, much as a punishment might be used to teach a child not to lie.

Define the Strength of the Curse

The final aspect that we'll examine in this section is the relative strength of the curse being cast. In general, curses can be grouped into five different levels of seriousness: embarrassing, frustrating, troublesome, dangerous, and lethal.

Embarrassing Curses: These, the most minor of curses, are used to punish minor transgressions. A thief who has stolen from his brother (who can afford it, but is shocked by this betrayal of trust) might be cursed by his sibling to have hands as black as coal. There is little actual game effect from this curse, but it adds a touch of flavor and serves as a constant reminder to the thief of his wrongdoing. If he chooses to, the thief can cover his affliction by simply wearing gloves. Although gloves might hinder his thieving abilities somewhat, this reduction is not a direct result of the curse, but rather is a product of his own attempts to deal with it. Similarly, someone who considers himself a lady's man might be cursed with a stutter whenever he speaks to a beautiful woman.

Frustrating Curses: These curses are used in response to fairly moderate affronts. Such curses can interfere with a person's everyday life and may be fairly imposing in their effects. Frustrating curses often have some negative effect on an aspect of game mechanics. If the thief in the previous example had lifted a valuable gold watch from his brother's pocket, he might be cursed to have his hands shake incessantly. This would cause a reduction in his chances of success when he tried to use many of his thieving skills. While he might still be able to move silently or hide in shadows, he would certainly have problems picking a pocket or disarming a trap. The severity of the penalty is up to the DM, but it should take into account the seriousness of the offense and the emotion of the person laying the curse.

Troublesome Curses: These curses are, perhaps, the most useful for adventure design purposes. In general, troublesome curses can be laid only for a fairly major offenses. They cause the victim to alter the way in which he lives his life, often drastically, but they place him in no true physical peril. The peasant's curse that we keep referring to in this chapter is probably a troublesome curse. In many cases, these curses will have profound impacts in one or more aspects of game mechanics. In the case of our thief, for example, he might be given an aversion to gold, so that the mere sight of the metal causes him extreme pain. This effect might be further augmented by implanting an unending desire for gold in his

heart, making him a terrible miser who cannot touch the thing he covets most.

Dangerous Curses: At this point, we are dealing with truly powerful magic that is doled out only in response to a great wrong. A dangerous curse radically alters the victim's former lifestyle. The peasant's curse might fall into this category if it were more severe—say, causing the knight's sword arm to whither like an old tree limb. Any curse in this category can utterly destroy a person's life. In the case of our thief, if he were stricken blind for a day the moment he violated a law, his career as a rogue would be ruined. As mentioned in the original boxed set, it is recommended that player characters not be stricken with curses of this magnitude unless the means for removing the curse is fairly close at hand.

As a general guideline, a curse of this level might cause someone to be afflicted with lycanthropy on the three nights of the full moon. The individual would go along normally until the light of the full moon first breaks the horizon . . .

Lethal Curses: This is the most dreadful type of curse, for it utterly destroys the victim's way of life and may even lead to his death. It is only possible to bestow this powerful a curse in response to a great wrong and with great emotion. It is said that these curses are handed down directly from the dark powers as a prelude to the absolute destruction of someone for whom there is no hope of redemption. As pointed out in the original boxed set, Strahd Von Zarovich's transformation to a vampire was the result of such a curse. Any curse that utterly transforms someone's physical or mental self would fall into this category.

Player characters should never fall under this type of curse unless it is the Dungeon Master's desire that the character be removed from the game. In general, if this is the case, the player ought to be aware of the potential loss of his character and be offered a chance to repent before the curse takes hold. Otherwise, hard feelings are sure to result, and that isn't much fun for anyone.

The Powers Check

Speaking a curse is not small matter in the demiplane of dread. The very nature of the act sends a shiver through the fabric of the land that cannot help but draw the attention of the dark powers. Thus, as soon as the curse is uttered, the individual laying it must roll a Ravenloft powers check.

The chance of failing this check varies with the power of the curse. The more deadly the curse, the more likely it is to come to the notice of the dark powers. The following table indicates the normal chances that a powers check will fail for a curse of a given level. Dungeon Masters are, of course, free to modify this based on the circumstances surrounding the event. A highly justified curse, for example, would be less likely to see the caster punished than one thrown out of pure spite and malice.

Curse Strength	Powers Check
Embarrassing	2%
Frustrating	4%
Troublesome	8%
Dangerous	16%
Lethal	32%

Resolving the Curse

Once the deed has been done and a curse has been laid, the DM must decide whether or not it takes hold and, if it does, what effect it has. There are some guidelines for these decisions.

The most important rule of thumb is that if it is dramatically appropriate for the curse to take hold, then it does so. In a RAVENLOFT® game, it is important to bear in mind that no table or rule of numbers can replace the insight and eye of the Dungeon Master. This is as true for curses as it is for encounters, events, and combat. If the DM's story would be served better by having the curse succeed, then it succeeds. If it would impede the progress of the adventure, then it fails. That's all there is to it.

Still, there are those who demand, and not incorrectly, a table or chart to give them some

idea of the chances that a curse will take hold.

To determine if a curse succeeds or fails, simply total the values given on the following chart and make a percentile die roll against the final total.

Curse Success Chances

Justification	
Highly Justified	+10%
Justified	0%
Unjustified	−10%
Emotional State	
Highly Charged	+15%
Charged	+5%
Normal	−10%
Background	
Vistani	+25%
Other Ravenloft Native	+10%
Non-native	−10%
Male	−5%
Female	+10%
Character Type	
Spellcaster	+5%
Non spellcaster	−5%
Lawful	−5%
Chaotic	+5%
Good	−10%
Evil	+10%
Drama of Curse	
High	+25%
Average	0%
Low	−25%
Important Curse Basics	
Mentions Game Mechanics	−15%
Includes Broad Prohibitions	−15%
Not Tailored to Victim	−15%
No Escape Clause	−15%
Result of Powers Check	
Succeeded	−25%
Failed	+25%

Curses and Player Characters

Curses can be very powerful things. Used correctly, they can make for some stunning effects on both the adventure and the characters in it. However, this same potential impact can drive a Dungeon Master to despair when it is unleashed upon the adventure at an unexpected time. Even the mightiest efforts of the DM can be ruined by a casually tossed curse. What this all means is that player characters should not be able to toss curses around freely.

Still, this doesn't mean that a PC should be unable to lay a curse. Curses can be fun (in game terms) and the players are expecting to have fun when they enter the realms of the Dungeon Master's imagination. So PCs can invoke curses, but only under greatly limited circumstances.

The Dungeon Master should pay careful attention to the use of a curse by a PC. The rules presented earlier that govern curse content and style should be very strictly enforced. The most important thing, however, is that the curse must be dramatically correct.

For example, assume the player characters have been hunting a vampire across the wilds of Valachan. On the wooded shores of the River Arden, just outside of Habelnik, they believe that they have cornered the monster. In reality, however, they have walked into a trap. One of their number is killed when the vampire strikes and the others are left wounded and unable to follow him as he flees into the night. If the dying character wasn't utterly vaporized, then the DM might allow him a last few words. With his dying breath, the character curses the vampire that killed him. Similarly, if one of the other characters in the group had a special relationship to the deceased, he might clutch the fallen one in his arms and speak a tearful curse against the vampire that claimed his beloved companion.

Such curses still require a dark powers check, of course, and that alone can be enough to keep many players from using them. If players insist on invoking curses frequently,

ignoring the peril that they place themselves in by exposing themselves to the dark powers in this way, simply stop rolling for their checks. Assume that they fail automatically. The DM will probably find that a player whose character has begun to change into a reptilian swamp dweller is less prone to accept the gifts of the dark powers.

Exclusivity of Curses

As a general rule, any individual, PC, or NPC can only be under the effects of one curse at a time. Otherwise, a truly evil fiend, the type of person who makes for an excellent antagonist in any adventure, would quickly become so burdened with curses that he would be crippled. What a waste that would be of a perfectly good villain.

An important note to make at this point concerns the domain lords. By definition, all of them is laboring under the most horrible curse of all: that of ruling a domain in Ravenloft. Thus, any curse that the players might wish to lay upon them is doomed to failure.

Sample Curses

In the excitement of a game, it is often difficult to come up with an appropriate curse to lay on a player character. If the possibility of a curse being laid has been seen by the Dungeon Master in setting up the adventure, then one can be prepared ahead of time. If, however, the curse comes about as a result of an unexpected turn of events, the following curses may prove useful for the DM.

These samples are all written as four-line verses, two pairs of rhyming couplets, but that need not always be the case. It is merely the style in which these samples were written. Curses can certainly be made without these poetic embellishments, or they may be done in different styles. An woman from an oriental culture, for example, might lay a curse in the style of a brief haiku.

Many of these curses could be used on people of other character classes. The druid's curse could be used on any person fond of plants and flowers, as could the elf's curse.

Curse for a Bard:
The gift of verse is yours no more,
Lost be the lines of ancient lore.
From this day forth your mind shall wander,
Of things disjointed shall you ponder.

Curse for a Druid:
From this day forth your touch is doom,
You shall see no more the flower's bloom.
Your hand brings with it autumn's chill;
The blossoms wither, the trees you kill.

Curse for a Dwarf:
Oh you who dwells in splendid halls
'Neath mountains deep and granite walls.
No more shall you possess the sight
That sees in the darkest dead of night.

Curse for an Elf:
The bloom of flowers and green of trees;
Your life no more shall fill with these.
The scent of blossoms, sweet and bright,
Shall rob you now of all your might.

Curse for a Gnome:
The cut of crystals, gems so bright,
Escapes you now, your craft to spite.
Now for you they've lost their gleam,
Bland and dull their colors seem.

Curse for a Half-Elf:
A bastard son are you my friend,
Born alone, that's how you'll end.
No more in elf-kind find your place,
shunned be you by human race.

Curse for a Halfling:
Once you were sure and light of step,
A silent shadow in woodland's depth.
Now your footfalls have no grace.
From no foe you'll hide your face.

CURSES

Curse for a Paladin:
The holy code you hold so dear
Has slipped from you at last I fear.
Your days of kindness draw to a close,
As in your heart dark evil grows.

Curse for a Priest:
The symbol of your faithful kin,
Sears your flesh and burns your skin.
When you touch this thing you serve,
It chills your heart and breaks your nerve.

Curse for a Psionicist:
The power of thoughts is yours you say,
To read men's minds and feelings sway.
But your own mind is open too,
To others with powers just like you.

Curse for a Ranger:
No man or beast from you can hide,
You follow their tracks both far and wide.
Now the trails they leave behind
Shall prove impossible for you to find.

Curse for a Rogue:
Hear no more the call of gold,
To its charms your heart grows cold.
No longer shall you covet treasure,
No more shall it give you pleasure.

Curse for a Warrior:
By the blackness of the night,
Gone forever is your might.
Weakened be your mortal frame,
With these words your strength I claim.

Curse for a Wizard:
You burn in shadows deep and dark,
A mystic light, a wizard's spark.
No more your magical spells recall,
Forget them now, one and all.

POWERS CHECKS

There is a mysterious force, a lingering and majestic curse, behind the dread domains of Ravenloft. Sages speculate about its nature and try to assess its power. They ponder its earliest beginnings and question its ultimate ends. For all the theories and questions, for all the lore and history, for all their tireless efforts, they know nothing of the dark powers.

There are those who say that the dark powers are like the gods that hold sway in many other realms. Some say they are foul and sinister creatures from beyond wildspace, who have created Ravenloft as some horrible zoo of evil. Others claim that there is but one entity controlling Ravenloft, a creature of absolute evil (or good), and that to call him (or her) by a plural name is incorrect. Still others insist that there are no dark powers and that the things attributed to their diabolic influence are but mere coincidence. On these points and more, the scholars disagree. The only point that they will all concede is that, in the end, none of them will ever know if they are right or wrong. For all that the dark powers are or are not, they are certainly mysterious. Whatever their nature, it seems certain that the dark powers are and will remain far beyond the ken of mortal men.

Still, there is much information that is available to a sage, if he is careful in his research and learns to distinguish the colorful tales of folklore and myth from the harsh black and white of the truth.

The dark powers have some interest in the evil that men do inside or outside the misty borders of Ravenloft. For those outside their dominion, acts of great evil and malice can result in transportation to the dark land. In the most extreme cases, fiends drawn into Ravenloft will find themselves gifted (or cursed) with a domain of their own. Evil beings of less power may find themselves transformed into mist horrors, imprisoned in the vapors that surround the land like a vast ethereal sea.

People in Ravenloft are subject to a very direct effect of the dark powers: the powers check. Whenever someone commits an evil act in Ravenloft, there is a chance that the dark powers will notice it and, if the act warrants it, they may respond in some manner.

Their response is two-fold. On one hand, they reward the evildoer with some measure of increased power, perhaps an improved sense or unique ability that sets him above his peers. On the other hand, they punish the act of evil by making some change in the individual that reflects both the heinous act and the nature of the reward. As time goes by and more evil deeds are added to the first, the rewards and penalties handed out by the dark powers become greater and greater. In the end, even someone who began life as a pure and innocent babe may find himself transformed into a creature of absolute darkness and horror that rules his own domain.

Of course, the dark domains are not open only to creatures of evil. In many cases, there are accounts of great heroes, even paladins and noble priests, passing through the ethereal shroud of the mists and finding themselves in the clutches of this dire land. The mechanism by which such people fall into Ravenloft is not well understood. Indeed, there is a fair amount of evidence that suggests these unwitting travelers may be the victims of simple, random chance.

Still, there are those who insist that there is a purpose to everything that transpires in Ravenloft and that the dark powers will have no part of accidents. To these sages, every creature in Ravenloft, good or evil, is drawn in for some purpose. None can avoid this mysterious summons, and escape is impossible until the dark powers relinquish their hold.

There is a common misperception that the dark powers tempt people into evil acts. Indeed, nothing could be farther from the truth. No one has ever been sought out by the dark powers and offered a great reward in exchange for the undertaking of an evil act. Rather, the dark powers are always watching for evil done

for evil's sake. They constant probe time and space with their unimaginable senses. They seem to make no move to foster evil, but act only to reward or punish (depending upon your point of view) those who have already begun to follow the paths of darkness. Thus, the dark powers of Ravenloft never contact someone and offer, say, eternal life in exchange for some foul deed. They operate only after the fact, rewarding or punishing as they see fit.

A last note about the dark powers is in order. There are many who claim to have spoken with them, whatever they may be. It is not uncommon for someone who has been moved to an act of evil to claim that a sinister, exterior force prompted his actions. Many perceive this as the hand of the dark powers.

There has been only one documented case of a person making contact with the dark powers and having some manner of conversation with them. This happening, recounted in the *Tome of Strahd* (see page 8 of the *Realm of Terror* book in the original RAVENLOFT® boxed set), appears to have been utterly unique. It might well be that even this account is flawed; none but Strahd himself can say, and he seems reluctant to discuss the matter.

This is not, of course, to say that people have not tried to make contact with the dark powers. Many have used various magical, spiritual, and even psionic means to attempt such a feat. In the end, however, every effort has met with failure or disaster. Most experts on the history and natural laws of Ravenloft seem to agree that it is unwise and unhealthy to look too deeply into the abyss that lurks at the core of this land.

The Powers Check

The actual game mechanics involved in making a powers check are presented in the original boxed set. It is simple and easy to use in a game session. There are, however, some subtleties that need to be expanded upon and added to the rules presented there.

When to Make a Powers Check

For the purposes of Ravenloft powers checks, not all acts that might be defined as evil need be considered. For example, the act of killing is rightly classed as evil by most cultures, but the circumstances around the act must be considered. Was it murder done in the heat of passion? Was the death accidental or caused by negligence? Was the act committed in self defense or in the pursuit of a greater good? In all these cases, no powers check would be made.

A powers check is made only when a deliberate, calculated act of evil is committed. The more foul the act, the more likely it is to draw the attention of the dark powers and cause them to reward/punish the person committing it.

Shades of Gray: Some other acts that don't seem overly evil might force a character to make a powers check as well. As with all things, this is subject to a Dungeon Master's desires and interpretations.

Consider a group of heroes who come across a long-abandoned temple in the midst of the foul swamps of Souragne. The temple is clearly unused, and has been for many decades, but it appears to have been dedicated to a good deity when it was in service. It might be that the exploration of this temple would not be an evil act, but removing its treasures (especially if this defiles the temple) might well be.

In another case, the same group of adventurers might be trapped in the sandy wastes of Har'Akir when they stumble upon an ancient tomb. Would the act of removing the treasures from this crypt be evil? In the eyes of the natives, there is no greater crime than that of grave robbing. To those from another culture, there might be no great sin in this.

There are two general guidelines for the resolution of such cultural or moral conflicts. The first assumes that an act is not evil unless the individual committing it sees it as such. Thus, a grave robber who saw no malice in his actions might not be subject to the scrutiny of

the dark powers. The second consideration is that of the cultural norms of a given domain. In this school of thought, an act is good or evil based upon how the local populace perceives it. Thus, in Har'Akir, any grave looting is considered worthy of a powers check.

The decision as to which guideline to follow is left to the individual Dungeon Master. The former is good for forcing players to act in keeping with their roles and maintain a feeling of conscience in the game. The latter is better for presenting local taboos and superstitions in the context of an adventure.

Mitigating Circumstances: Another common exception to the requirements for powers checks are cases where the ends might be seen to justify the means. For example, an evil necromancer is about to transform a young woman into an undead ghoul. In order to rescue her, a band of heroes is forced to fight, and kill, several of the charmed guards that protect the necromancer's keep. Killing these unwitting servants of evil might well be considered evil, especially if no attempt was made to subdue or avoid fighting them. If there was no time left for such considerations, however, or if the heroes were unaware that the guards had not willingly chosen to follow the necromancer's evil ways, then no check would be required.

If, on the other hand, a more difficult (but still viable) means of reaching the wizard was discarded because it was easier to slaughter his underlings, then a check is certainly called for. Such callous disregard for life has been the first step on many a ruinous journey.

It is important, then, that the DM not set the players up where they have no choice but to do evil. No one enjoys being put in a no-win situation, especially in something as personal as a role-playing game. If the players are put in a position that forces them to take some action that might normally be considered evil, no powers check is made.

It is impossible to be forced or tricked into an evil act that merits a powers check. One of the most basic purposes of this game mechanic is to instill a fear of evil in the players. To be evil, in this sense, an act must be premeditated and undertaken with a full understanding of its vile nature.

PC or NPC? That is the Question: An examination of the role of powers checks for various types of characters is in order at this point.

For PCs, a powers check can be an important and dramatic part of the adventure. A character who has failed one or two checks is faced with the looming possibility of becoming something dark and sinister. If this happens, his character is lost, becoming an NPC. No doubt such a player will be considering possible acts of redemption (discussed later in this chapter) and certainly he will refrain from anything that is remotely evil.

For NPCs, however, the main thrust of a powers check—to promote role-playing—is lost. For this reason, it is advised that Dungeon Masters use powers checks only for player characters. Randomness has no place in the life of an NPC—if he commits an evil act, the DM should simply decide if it warrants a powers check and whether or not that check fails. For the most part, DMs should simply ignore this aspect of Ravenloft in the case of NPCs.

There is, however, another way to use NPCs and powers checks in the game. By having an NPC in the game who undergoes repeated powers check failures, the DM can drive home the inherent dangers of evil in the demiplane of dread. Nothing serves to better drive home a point like this than watching someone important to the party, such as a valuable henchman, slowly decay into a creature of darkness. If in the end he turns on his master and former companions, the shock is complete. Evil deeds have destroyed this hapless fellow, and the player characters are warned not to follow in his footsteps.

Rolling the Check

The procedure by which a powers check is made is described clearly in the original RAVENLOFT® boxed set. To summarize, the Dungeon Master assigns a base percentage chance, determined by the malevolence of the evil act, and then a simple die roll is made against it. In general, this chance will be between 1% and 10%, but certain truly evil acts will draw more challenging rolls. If the roll exceeds the chance assigned, then the character has eluded the notice of the dark powers—this time. If, however, the roll is equal to or less than the chance defined by the DM, the character has been spotted by the dark powers, and he advances one step down the road to destruction.

The Value of Evil: Some DMs have a hard time assigning a value to the powers check. To be sure, the difference between 1% and 10% is subtle and, in game terms, the risk of failure is fairly minor. Still, even a 1% chance will catch up with an evil character eventually, and a 10% chance ought to be enough to worry even the most callous of sinister people.

In order to help out the DM, the following is a list of various evil acts. Each is assigned a numeric value between 1 and 10, indicating the chances of a powers check that are associated with such a deed. These are, of course, just guidelines. Anyone who commits an evil act with unusual cruelty, or who is especially malicious, will find his chances of failure increased by one or two points.

A number of categories and terms are used in the presentation of this hierarchy of evil. In order to eliminate misunderstandings and confusion, let's take a few moments to define and clarify them.

Crimes or Acts of Violence: The following chart lists some very general categories of criminal and violent acts. It cross references these with the nature of the person *suffering* from such an act. Thus, someone who brutally murders a good NPC or friend (say, a henchman or follower) would have a powers check of 10% to roll. Each of the general categories is described below.

Assault, Unprovoked: An unprovoked assault is any attack upon another person that is done out of malice or spite. This includes minor physical violence like beatings or brawls and some violent crimes (mugging, for instance). It assumes that the victim is not permanently harmed by the attack and will recover sooner or later. This is the sort of thing that marks a bully.

Assault, Grievous: This is more brutal than the former category, and it assumes that some lasting harm has been done to the victim. It includes many of the more severe violent crimes, such as attempted murder.

Betrayal, Major: This implies the betrayal of a person's trust, or taking actions that are against their best interest. Major betrayal includes such vile deeds as luring someone to a vampire's lair in exchange for the fiend's promise not to harm you or your family. In general, if it leads to personal harm or death, it's major betrayal.

Betrayal, Minor: Although less severe than the previous category, actions of this type cannot be discounted. Deeds that lead to embarrassment or a change in lifestyle fall into this category.

Extortion: This covers areas such acts as blackmail, where the threat of physical violence or loss is used to force someone else to perform an undesirable task, violate a law, or refrain from reporting a criminal or violent act.

Lying: This covers all manner of intentional deceit, even the simple omission of facts. However, unless the lie has some direct negative effect on the person hearing (and believing it), no powers check is made. This is, all things considered, a very minor indiscretion in the darkness that is Ravenloft.

Murder, Brutal: In order to qualify as brutal, a murder must cause undue suffering or horror on the part of the victim. Often, this is a very fine judgment call. For example, poisoning someone would not normally fall into this category. However, if the toxin caused great pain and suffering before it brought death, the DM might decide that it did fall into this class.

Unusually brutal killings might well fall under the heading of torture.

Murder, Premeditated: This includes any killing that is done in the name of personal gain and vengeance, so long as the victim is simply done away with and not made to suffer.

Theft, Grave Robbing: This type of theft is so unusual in most cultures that it merits its own category. As a rule, it includes looting fallen bodies in war or removing any treasure from a place of burial. It also includes acts such as slipping a ring from the finger of dead woman just before she is placed in her coffin. In some cultures, this crime is far worse. In Har'Akir, for example, grave robbing might fall under the category of desecrating a holy place.

Theft, Major: This covers any type of theft that results in great personal hardship for the victim. In general, a theft must be great enough to cause a person to change his life style in order to fall into this category.

Theft, Minor: Any theft that does not fall into the previous category, such as picking a pocket or cutting a purse, is placed under this heading.

Threat of Violence: This is a fairly minor offense in most cases. It generally involves any threatening gesture or statement that causes another individual to fear for his well being. It does not include mundane threats like those made by a drill sergeant or a member of the watch attempting to extract information from a reluctant prisoner. By the same token, warnings to refrain from some course of action ("Don't move your hands, necromancer, or I'll kill you!") don't count.

Torture, Routine: Almost without a doubt, this is among the most heinous and evil things that one man can do to another. Intentionally causing physical or mental suffering is an act abhorred by all but the most horrible of cultures. This type of torture, the less severe of the two, includes all such acts that might seem to be for a purpose. Torturing a prisoner to learn who his master is, for instance. Even in the "best" of circumstances, this is a thoroughly reprehensible act.

Torture, Sadistic: This vile category includes all manner of tortures inflicted for the simple joy of causing pain. It is so evil an act that every example of it fairly begs for the attention of the dark powers.

Unholy Acts: These are deeds done against a church or other religious body. This is especially important to those who are making use of *The Complete Priest's Handbook*, or to groups of adventurers that include one or more paladins or priests. The various evil acts are listed and cross referenced with the alignment of the faith that has been offended. The first three columns refer to vile deeds done on behalf of or in cooperation with faiths that are not those of the character. The fourth column is used to resolve checks resulting from trespasses against a character's own faith. Powers checks are generally required only for violations that a character is aware of. For example, a paladin in the service of Thor who does not bow when entering a temple sacred to Ra has committed no crime. Of course, if he has pledged to respect the followers and symbols of the church of Ra, this is another matter.

Breaking a Tenet: All faiths have normal rules and regulations that each and every one of their followers are expected to obey. For example, a god of the harvest might require that 10% of every harvest be burned in homage to his help in growing the crop. If a follower of the deity intentionally sacrifices less than his full share, he has violated one of his faith's tenets. Generally, these transgression are minor and don't require a powers check unless done repeatedly or with malicious intent.

Breaking an Oath: This is a more serious violation than the previous one. It requires that the act be in violation of some promise made under the auspices of the church. For example, a cleric who has sworn never to use an edged weapon finds himself in mortal combat with an evil creature. Instead of using his own mace, he picks up the magical *flame tongue* blade of a fallen comrade and cuts the beast down. His reasons might seem fairly rational; he might have felt that it would take too long to kill the monster with his own, lesser weapon. His oath,

POWERS CHECK

Recommended Powers Checks

Crimes or Acts of Violence	Evil NPCs or Monsters	Neutral NPCs or Strangers	Good NPCs or Friends	PCs, Family or Innocents
Assault, Unprovoked	Nil	1	2	3
Assault, Grievous	1	2	4	6
Betrayal, Major	1	3	6	9
Betrayal, Minor	Nil	1	3	6
Extortion	Nil	2	5	8
Lying	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
Murder, Brutal	3	6	10	*
Murder, Premeditated	2	3	6	10
Theft, Grave Robbing	Nil	1	5	7
Theft, Major	Nil	1	4	7
Theft, Minor	Nil	Nil	3	6
Threat of Violence	Nil	Nil	1	2
Torture, Routine	4	7	*	*
Torture, Sadistic	10	*	*	*

Unholy Acts	Evil Faith	Neutral Faith	Good Faith	Own Faith
Breaking a Tenet	Nil	1	2	5
Breaking an Oath	Nil	2	5	10
Breaking a Vow	Nil	5	10	*
Desecration	Nil	4	8	*

Other Evil Acts

Casting an Evil Spell	1% per level of spell, but only with spells noted as requiring a powers check upon use.
Laying a Curse	2% for embarrassing curses, +2% per level thereafter.

Notes:
Nil—Too minor or "gray" to require a powers check.
*—These deeds exceed the range of normal powers checks. The DM should refer to the following section, "Acts of Ultimate Darkness."

however, requires him to always forsake blades and their kin.

Breaking a Vow: This is the most serious violation that one can commit against a deity. This category includes transgressions against one's promises made under the auspices of the deity. In this case, the act is so great that it flies in the face of everything the faith stands for, and it violates a duty to the ultimate power, not just to the church and its agents. For example, a paladin who betrays the trust of his church by watching as one of its temples is sacked might well find himself in this level of jeopardy.

Desecration: This is a broad category that covers any manner of destruction or defilement of sacred places or objects. Thus, it might include anything from destroying an important holy symbol to doing evil in a temple of good. In order for an act to qualify as desecration, the object or place must be made offensive to the deity so that any blessings he has bestowed upon it are withdrawn.

Other Evil Acts: Of course, these lists do not include every conceivable act of evil that a man might do. Still, they do provide a broad overview of the various levels of powers checks and the types of deeds that they are intended to punish. There are countless other actions that might require characters to make a powers check. Two of the more common ones are presented here.

Casting an Evil Spell: Both the original boxed set and in the *Nova Arcanum* book in this collection present variations on traditional AD&D® game spells. In many cases, spells are also marked to indicate that their use requires the caster to make a powers check. When this is done, the chance is equal to 1% per level of the spell employed. Thus, the use of an *energy drain* spell requires a 9% check; casting *chill touch* causes a 1% check.

Laying a Curse: The first part of this book dealt with the creation and use of curses. In that section, it was written that anyone using a curse must roll a powers check. The chance of failure is 2% for an embarrassing curse, with an additional 2% being added for each level beyond embarrassing. Thus, a lethal curse requires a 10% powers check.

Acts of Ultimate Darkness

In some cases, a character will commit an act so vile that a powers check seems to be too minor a response. These deeds are termed *acts of ultimate darkness* and have a much greater chance of drawing the attention of Ravenloft's dark powers.

What sorts of things fall into this category? A perfect example would be Strahd's murder of his own brother in an attempt to possess his brother's wife. This crime involved betraying and murdering his own kin, driving a beautiful and innocent woman to suicide, and making vows to forces darker than any man was ever meant to treat with. Clearly, this act went beyond the normal maximum of 10% on a powers check.

When a PC commits an act of ultimate darkness, the DM is free to assign any chance of failure to the powers check, be it 25%, 50%, or even 100%. In the latter case, the Dungeon Master has seen a player character attempt an action so vile that he cannot help but punish it. When this happens, automatic failure of a powers check is a perfectly acceptable response. Obviously, Strahd's betrayal fell into this category.

The Eye of Evil

If a player is told to "roll a 5% powers check," he is going to be well aware that a game mechanic is being used to regulate the actions of his character. This, of course, goes against the DM's efforts to establish the mood, atmosphere, and style of a RAVENLOFT® game session.

In order to avoid that, the DM is advised to make the powers check a tense moment of drama. In this way, the routine exercise of a game mechanic is transformed into a pivotal juncture in the career of the character. There are several ways to accomplish this.

Let's consider an example. Suppose that a

paladin has fled from a battle, leaving his companion to face certain death at the hands of a deadly minion of evil. Obviously, if the paladin fled because of a spell or special ability of the fiend, then no powers check is required. If, however, the character abandoned his companion out of something so base as cowardice or a desire for self preservation, a check might well be required. If we assume that the act counts as major betrayal of another PC, then a 9% powers check is required.

Rather than simply telling the player to roll percentile dice, the DM tells him that his character begins to feel a strange sensation in the air around him as he flees from the battle:

"At first, you attribute the chill to the cold of the night air as it dries the sweat on your skin. Slowly, however, you come to realize that it is more than that. This chill runs beneath your skin. It feels as if your blood has become ice water. You have the distinct impression that something very dark is watching you closely and eagerly. It seems to be calling to you, but you hear nothing."

At this point, the Dungeon Master can ask the player to roll percentile dice without saying directly that it is a powers check. If the check is successful, then the eye of the dark powers moves on and the strange feeling passes, leaving the character unchanged but aware that something macabre has happened. If the check is failed, however, the DM can maintain the mood by detailing the beginning steps on the paladin's road to disaster:

"Gradually, as you continue to distance yourself from the battle, you become more and more aware that something unnatural has focused all its attention on you. The chill that you felt before builds into a surge of cold that causes the marrow in your bones to ache."

At this point, the mood of the check can still be destroyed by simply telling the player what changes have come over his character. Let's suppose that the DM feels the dark powers have begun to reward/punish his paladin's act of cowardice with a gradual transformation into a hyena, a creature noted—rightly or wrongly—as a lowly and timid scavenger. Instead of simply saying "your character now has a movement rate of 15 when he runs on all fours," the DM can introduce this as an element of play:

"As the last echoes of the unreal laughter fade from your senses, you realize that you are moving through the woods at great speed. Trees race past you, and the moonlight shining down through their branches flickers and flashes across your body. The crisp air blowing past your face seems to have brought your senses to life as they have never been before. Much to your surprise, you find that you have taken to running on all fours like a wolf or dog."

While this might excite the player and cause him to believe that he has stumbled across some great inner power, he might also find that his character cannot stand to eat fresh meat. Imagine the shock he feels when he learns that the paladin is now utterly unable to eat anything that has not begun to rot.

By keeping such elements in mind during game play, the DM can use the unusual rules and mechanics that make the demiplane of dread so different and exciting to play. The same hold true for fear, horror, and madness checks. If this is reduced to a simple routine of die rolling, it loses all the macabre atmosphere that it was meant to convey. It lessens the fun for both the players and the Dungeon Master.

Seduction of the Innocent

The six stages of a character's destruction through failed powers checks are well defined in the original RAVENLOFT® boxed set. They need not be reviewed or expanded upon here.

The key to all elements in a Ravenloft adventure is a sense of poetic justice. Each of the domains is ruled by a lord whose curse reflects the crimes that he committed. In Barovia, Strahd lives forever alone but is eternally haunted by promise of an undying love that he can never claim. The feral Captain Monette, who longs for nothing but to travel the seas of the world, finds himself master of an island surrounded by oceans he can never explore. This macabre reflection is a vital part of the atmosphere of Ravenloft.

It was mentioned in the first chapter of this book that all curses should reflect the crimes they are punishing. The same is true of powers checks. Whenever a Dungeon Master is handing out the punishments and rewards for a failed powers check, he should consider the nature of the deed that brought about the check in the first place. That is why, in our earlier example, the DM wisely decided that the cowardly paladin would begin to slip gradually into the shape of a hyena. If the paladin makes no effort to halt his descent into darkness, he will gradually become more and more like this cowardly creature. Eventually, he may transform utterly into a hyena or a become the first of a new breed of lycanthropes. If his corruption is absolute, he might even be cursed with a domain of his own.

Redemption

Once the road to evil is chosen, it is a difficult path to turn away from. The corruption of body and soul, like the decay of an apple, cannot easily be halted. Further, it is almost impossible to reverse this process.

Still, that does not mean that all hope of recovery is lost for those who quickly recognize that they have begun to slip into a pattern of evil. In the early stages of corruption, it is possible to not only halt the metamorphosis, but also to reverse it. If steps to this end are taken quickly, then a restoration to grace is possible, though difficult. Once the spirit has become too tainted with evil, however, nothing can be done.

The stages of corruption can be reversed with effort. As a general rule, the character must face again the situation that brought about his moral failings and, this time, stay to the path of truth. If the character can resist the course that evil dictates through several such junctures of fate, he has a chance to break free of the grasping talons of the dark powers. The number of trials that must be passed in succession is equal to the chance of failure assigned to the last powers check. After these temptations have been resisted, a second powers check is rolled, with the chance of failure being the same as the first. If the roll is successful, then the character is assumed to throw off the effects of the last failure. If he was only at stage one, he would be wholly free of the taint of evil and returned to a state of grace. A character who had progressed to stage three would pull back far enough from evil to return himself to the second stage.

Failure of the powers check indicates that the character can never again rise to a stage of less evil than he currently holds. The taint on his spirit is too great. While he might resist further descent into darkness, he will never again be fully restored to the light.

Anyone who has passed beyond The Embrace and reached stage five or six is a lost cause. No amount of effort can free these characters from the shackles of despair that they have forged.

The Timepiece of Klorr

This unusual pocket watch was brought into Ravenloft from an unknown world over 200 years ago. Since that time, it has proven itself to be both highly powerful and greatly evil. Indeed, few who have ever learned of its existence without owning it for themselves have lived long enough to pass on the story of its wondrous nature.

Description: The *timepiece of Klorr* is crafted of an unusual alloy of gold, silver, and bronze. It is circular in shape, roughly two and one half inches in diameter, and it has a hinged lid that snaps down to protect the face of the watch when it is put away. The timepiece hangs from a slender chain, fashioned from the same indestructible alloy as the watch itself.

The metal from which the watch was made does not tarnish and cannot be harmed by any known force. Thus, the watch looks today just as it did when it was first created. Indeed, there is some evidence to indicate that the watch has actually become brighter and better polished over the years, although this might be an error caused by the scarcity of accounts of its existence.

The casing itself is ornate and carved with many dark and sinister shapes. Many resemble the twisting and writhing forms of tormented souls, while others are clearly those of the fiends that torment them through all eternity. The hinges on the lid and the clasp that secures the cover when it is down are fashioned in the image of skeletal claws.

When the cover is opened, the face of the watch is revealed. It is white in color—clearly some form of crystal—although its exact composition is unknown. A glass lens covers the face, but like the rest of the watch, it appears to be impervious to any manner of damage. The face is numbered, in an ornate script, from 1 to 13. The movement of the hands is sharp and steady, producing an audible click with the passing of each second. Mysteriously, the hands never seem to pass between the hours of 12 and 13. Even if one watches the face of the timepiece carefully, the hands seem to click from 12:59 to 1:00.

If opened in darkness, the white crystal of the face emits a soft glow so that the time may be easily read. No form of magical darkness can prevent the holder from seeing the illuminated dial, although it cannot be used to shed light upon surrounding objects in such a situation. That this effect is magical cannot be disputed, for at least one person who was wholly blind is said to have looked upon the face of the watch and seen it quite clearly. It is said that even a blindfold or similar obstruction cannot prevent the watch's owner from gazing upon its face.

The back of the watch is set with an inscription that is unreadable unless viewed with a *read magic* spell. When this is done, however, the following verse becomes clear:

By my power the sands are stayed,
The hour of death is long delayed,
The grip of time can be unmade,
But beware the price that's paid.

History: The timepiece was created some 350 years ago by Klorr, a watchmaker in a strange and mysterious land. Klorr had always been fascinated by clocks and timepieces of every description. In fact, his love for these objects had passed the bounds of any reasonable man and had become nothing short of an obsession. His whole home was filled with all manner of timepieces, each kept in perfect working order and synchronized so that they differed from each other by not so much as a second. It is said that the cacophony of an hour chiming in Klorr's shop was nearly enough to drive a man mad. Indeed, perhaps that accounts for the creation of this twisted chronometer.

As Klorr grew older, he came to realize that there was one timepiece in his home that he could not regulate or control: the beating of his own heart. He was reminded of this his entire waking life, for the throbbing in his chest seemed never to be in synchronization with the staccato clicking of the gears and springs of his countless clocks. It may be that this drove him mad, for he vowed that he would not permit his own heart to betray the perfect rhythms of his many timepieces.

Klorr spent years researching the magical powers that he would employ to create his next watch. He sought out a race of master metalworkers and begged them to teach him the secrets of their craft so that he might manufacture the watch from a metal that no earthly hand could damage. He pursued the foul and accursed magics of the necromancer and sought to gain knowledge over the functioning of the living heart so that he might learn to pace it with a timepiece. Eventually, he explored the extradimensional magics of the outer planes and sought the guidance of a diabolical presence there to aid him in the last stages of his efforts.

When Klorr had completed the construction of his pocket watch, he found that it did indeed control the beating of his own heart. With every rumble of his pulse in his ears, the hands snapped forward and a sharp tick would split the air.

Much to his own despair, however, he found that the watch seemed to control the beating of his heart to an even greater extent than he had intended. Indeed, it soon became clear to him that if the watch were not wound each day, if it were allowed to slow and stop, his heart would match its gradual paralysis. In the end, when the watch stopped, so would his heart. He seemed to have stopped aging as well. He needed no food, no drink, and the passing of the years meant nothing to him. The watch was the master of his fate now, not the fleeting fancies of time and many fates of the universe.

Whenever he used the watch to invoke one of its magical effects, he found that a third hand appeared on its face. This hand would begin to tick off the seconds between the twelfth and thirteenth hours on the clock's face. Before that hour had passed, he was forced to kill someone in order to satisfy the hunger of the timepiece. He soon found that he was unable to resist the urge to use the watch's magic, despite his desire not to do so. He also learned that the hunger of the watch was directly related to the exact power that he employed and the vitality of the person killed.

Eventually, Klorr found himself unable to hold out against the overwhelming magic of the watch. He became locked in a cycle of killings. Each time he hunted, he would use the powers of the watch. This would, in turn, compel him to kill again. This vicious cycle became the pattern of his life.

Powers: The *timepiece of Klorr* gives its holder many great powers, each of which can be used as often as desired. As soon as one is employed, however, the third hand appears on the face and the watch begins to count off the seconds of an hour. If it has not been able to absorb sufficient life energy to satisfy its hunger by the end of that hour, it will drain the energy of its holder, utterly and irrevocably destroying him. Nothing, not even a *wish* spell, can restore life to one slain in this manner.

Each time that one of the watch's powers is used, the holder of the *timepiece of Klorr* is moved to seek out and kill others of its race. The number of people that must be slain is determined by the power required to invoke a given spell effect. Each power of the watch is followed with a parenthetical number that indicates the number of levels of life energy that the watch must drain. Thus, if it were used to invoke a *feather fall* (1) spell and then a *haste* (3) spell by an elf, the owner would have to seek out and kill four 1st-(or 0-) level elves, two 2nd-level elves, or some other combination that would total four levels. The use of any of the watch's spells or spell-like abilities precludes taking another action in the same round.

The magical spells that are available to the holder of the timepiece are as follows: *feather fall* (1), *feign death* (3), *haste* (3), *hold person* (3), *hold undead* (3), *slow* (3), *extension I* (4), *distance distortion* (5), *extension II* (5), *hold monster* (5), *extension III* (6), *temporal stasis* (9), and *time stop* (9). All of these spells function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

In addition to its general magical abilities, the watch has several unique powers. As with the spell abilities, each of these has a cost associated with it.

Successful Saving Throws (3): Anyone holding the watch automatically succeeds on any saving throw that he is called upon to roll. This requires no thought on the part of the watch's holder, it just happens. In fact, the holder of the watch cannot even opt to fail a saving throw. If the person holding the watch has not yet been bound to it, the use of this ability links him to the *timepiece of Klorr*. This is the only power of the watch that does not count as an action for the holder. The only exception to this ability is the saving throw required to discard the watch, as detailed later.

Heal Damage (5): At any time, the watch can be called upon to heal damage that its holder has taken. When this is done, the effect is similar to that of a clerical *cure critical wounds* spell, save that it can be used only on the keeper of the timepiece.

Perfect Time (0): This ability of the *timepiece of Klorr* is an element of its nature and need not be invoked or "paid for" by the user. Nothing can upset the watch's ability to keep perfect track of the passage of time. Even if it and its owner are placed in a state of temporal stasis, the watch keeps working. No known force can cause the timepiece to lose so much as a second.

Visibility (0): Another side effect of the watch's existence is the fact that its face cannot be hidden from its owner. So long as he is able to flip open the cover to reveal the watch's face, no magical or physical blindness or obstruction can prevent him from looking upon it and knowing the exact time. As with the previous power, this one is free of any obligation on the part of the holder.

The Curse: The watch has no power over someone until he uses one of its abilities. This might be any of its spells or spell-like powers except for *perfect time* and *visibility*. Even the automatic power to successfully roll saving throws counts as a deliberate use, although the holder of the watch does not actually invoke this ability.

Upon using one of the watch's abilities, the holder becomes bound to it. From that point on, his heart beats at a perfect 60 beats per minute. Like the watch, his heart has become a perfect timepiece.

Once bound to the watch, the holder must personally kill the people required to repay the *timepiece of Klorr* for any powers he has used. If he fails in this effort, the watch claims him instead.

The *timepiece of Klorr* is a very difficult burden to rid oneself of. Once it has been taken up, the only time that an individual can attempt to discard it is when the watch's hunger has been sated. That is, when the third hand is not showing and the owner of the watch is not under an obligation to claim another victim.

At this time, a *remove curse* or similar spell has a chance of breaking the watch's tie to its owner. When the spell is cast, the recipient must roll a saving throw vs. spell. If the roll succeeds, the watch may be discarded simply by placing it down and walking away from it.

Other, more dramatic methods include sealing it in an iron box and casting it into the sea, tossing it into a volcano, or anything else that might satisfy the former owner that the *timepiece of Klorr* has been destroyed.

Of course, the timepiece cannot be so easily unmade. Those who granted Klorr the ability to create this great artifact will allow nothing so simple to destroy it. It is rumored that only the fires of the outer planes can cause the timepiece to be reduced to the elemental evil from which it was forged.

Fang of the Nosferatu

There are few things as vile and dark as the undead. These masters of evil move beneath the fleeting light of the moon, feeding upon the human race like wolves upon sheep. The *fang of the nosferatu* was forged in their image and placed into the hands of man. It is hard to imagine a more sinister gift.

Description: The blade of this dagger is of hardened steel, with strange, flowing symbols etched into the metal surface. The grooves of the lettering have all been filled with ruby dust, giving them the appearance of being written in blood upon the blade. The handle is wrapped in an odd, pebbled black hide. It is thought to be mind flayer or doppleganger skin. The pommel has a ruby mounted in a steel setting. The guard is an elongated oval, with the surface facing the blade carved to resemble a vampire with bared fangs. The eyes are filled with ruby dust, like the symbols etched into the blade.

Powers: The fang shows an aura of necromancy when examined with a *detect magic* spell. As a magical weapon, it is a *dagger +3*. The extra 3 points of damage that it inflicts are assumed to represent the dagger's drinking of the blood of its victim. If left in the body, it drains an additional 3 hit points of blood each round.

The dagger is not without other useful powers. Each successful attack that drains blood gives the owner 1 recovered hit point. Even if the blade causes several hit points of damage with the strike, the owner still regains only 1 point. The owner must be wielding the blade for this power to work. If another creature is using the blade, the dagger is satiated, but the true owner does not recover any hit points. There is rumored to be a special ritual involving the dagger that grants the owner immortality.

The *fang of the nosferatu* grants other powers to its owner as well. While it is in his immediate possession, the owner can shapechange into a wolf or a bat. In these forms he has the maximum hit points for that type of creature. If his true form has fewer hit points due to wounds, then the animal form is wounded to that level as well. Changing shape in this manner does not recover any lost hit points. None of the owner's equipment changes with him, except the dagger. If the owner already has a shapechanging power (from lycanthropy, for example) then the blade grants him the power to change into any animal form of small to large size, but not that of a monster or other humanoid.

The Curse: Like the nosferatu for which it is named, the blade thirsts for blood. Each hit point of blood that it absorbs satiates it for a day. Since the blood is being measured in hit points, it must come from a wound inflicted upon a living creature by the dagger. Animal blood will do just fine, but once a month the fang requires the blood of an intelligent creature. It cannot be satiated for more than seven days, regardless of how much blood it absorbs. Any day that it is not satiated, it draws 1 hit point from its owner. This can happen even if the dagger and its owner are far apart. If they are in different domains or different planes of existence, the effects are temporarily halted until they are reunited. Hit points lost in this manner can be recovered only by using the dagger (see below) or with a *heal* or *wish* spell.

The dagger is bonded to its owner as soon as it has been used to draw blood. Neither its useful effects nor its curses apply until this time. Once bonded, the new owner becomes immediately aware of the blood requirements of the blade and the permanency of the bond. The owner will be reluctant to give away the blade. If another creature has it and doesn't use it, the true owner will slowly wither and die, at 1 hit point a day. The current owner must die before a new owner can be selected.

History: This cursed dagger was once the closely guarded possession of Mordal the assassin. It was a gift from the Baron Von Kharkov, dark lord of Valachan. When Mordal betrayed his master, the vampire stole the dagger and imprisoned the traitor. He encased the dagger outside the assassin's cell, just out of his reach. Mordal died a little each day as the dagger was denied its blood. On every full moon, the Baron slaughtered animals with the dagger, restoring Mordal to his normal health. However, since he never took the life of an intelligent creature with it, 1 hit point every month was lost permanently. It took the assassin almost three years to die.

Upon Mordal's death, the dagger vanished. Legend says that the ghost of the assassin took the dagger and fled from Valachan. Nobody has ever dared to ask Baron Von Kharkov about the matter. Occasionally someone reports seeing a transparent, wraith-like figure holding forth a dagger, as if begging for someone to take it.

The Blood Coin

For many, the sin of avarice has been so tempting that all other considerations are set aside. This small token is a symbol of that seductive evil. As is often the case, its simple and pleasing appearance belies the great malevolence that lingers within its metal body.

Description: This coin resembles a normal silver piece. The engravings on the face and back always appear to be just what the owner expects. If it is found in a strange land, the owner will likely expect it to be a coin of that realm. Otherwise he is most likely to see it as one stamped with the markings of his own homeland. Since the markings of coins are of little interest to most adventurers, it can be passed from person to person and nobody will see anything strange. In fact, if one person takes the coin and pronounces out loud the stamp upon it, anyone in earshot that he gives it to will expect to see that stamp, and of course they will. The only distinguishing mark on the coin is a small red smudge that cannot be wiped off. Casual handling will not reveal the red stain.

History: Hoorku Mishkov was a young merchant in Borca. Charm, avarice, and deception were his hallmarks. Most Borcan merchants stayed within the borders of Borca and Dorvinia, plying their goods along those well-known, safe routes. Their profit margin was narrow, but enough to live comfortably.

Hoorku was convinced that he could make a larger profit by setting off for new lands. His aspirations for greater wealth led him to consider exploring a route down the seldom-used south road. With a small caravan of goods, he set off to find rich new trade routes.

The road south led to Gundarak. In that foul land he lost his entire caravan. Lord Gundar's son took the whole thing as "tribute." He

allowed the young merchant to keep one item of his choice. Rather than taking a horse so that he could return quickly to Borca, the foolish merchant kept an enchanted gem. The magic in the stone merely allowed it to glow when it touched true silver.

Rather than heading for home, the intrepid Hoorku journeyed downstream into the misty land of Invidia. There he met a Vistani woman in a colorful wagon by the water. She was young—only 20 years of age—but her heart was bitter. Unbeknownst to Hoorku, this was Gabrielle Aderre, at that time a new dark lord of Ravenloft. Her bitterness stemmed from her mother's warning to never bear children lest she bring monstrous evil into the world.

Hoorku saw an opportunity for profit in Gabrielle. He wooed her ardently, intending to steal what he could of her money. She was flattered, but she spurned him with the tale of her mother's dire prediction. In a flash of inspiration, Hoorku produced the magical gem and claimed it would allow a woman to birth a normal, healthy, good-natured child, no matter the race or disposition of either parent. Gabrielle's desire to break the bonds of her curse overrode her prudence and she let Hoorku seduce her. Of course, he made her pay him for the gem, extracting every coin in her possession.

Later, while Hoorku lay sleeping, Gabrielle used her magic to determine the workings of the gem. She immediately discovered its true worth. In her fury, she almost slew her young suitor in his sleep. Then an evil idea began to coil in her mind. With her magic, she caused Hoorku to sleep for many days. During that time she fashioned the *blood coin*. Gabrielle found that creating such a cursed item was something that she could now do easily as the lord of Invidia.

Before letting the knave of a merchant awaken, Gabrielle place the blood coin in his purse. Unaware of how long he had lain sleeping, Hoorku set off for the village of Karina. He promised to return by nightfall, although he really intended to buy a horse and return to Borca. In the village, he could not

resist shortchanging the stable master. Blood ran from his eyes, frightening the poor man to death.

Confused and alarmed, Hoorku tried to wash his face, only to find that he was unable to stem the flow of red. The foul magic of the coin let him know immediately that it was responsible for his plight. He stole a horse and fled the village. That night he dreamt of Gabrielle. In the dreams, she told him what she had done, and that the coin was his curse for betraying her.

To this day, horror stories are told of a weeping beggar in blood soaked clothes. He has wandered Borca and Dorvinia for years, trying to give away a silver coin. Legend has it that to take the coin is to assume the curse of the weeping beggar. In truth, Hoorku Mishkov died a broken man, clutching a silver coin. Gabrielle Aderre now distrusts and despises all men, partially due to Hoorku's betrayal.

Powers: If examined with a *detect magic* spell, the coin shows a faint aura of alteration. Anyone possessing this coin is able to cheat or

swindle any living creature without getting caught. Creatures with magic resistance get to check for their resistance to the coin. The swindle can occur during any exchange of properties. The owner could convince a wealthy merchant that a bit of broken pottery is worth 10,000 gold pieces. The purchaser is under no particular geas to buy, but he is utterly convinced of the value of the item. In most cases, he will go ahead with the exchange unless there are other immediate and pressing needs for what he would be giving up.

The Curse: For every gold piece of value that the owner swindles, he sheds tears of blood. He weeps one round per silver piece swindled, or ten rounds per gold piece. He cannot feel the tears running down his face, but they are plainly visible to everyone else. The blood stains anything it touches—his clothes, his bedding, even his saddle. These are normal blood stains that can be washed out if caught quickly.

Anyone seeing the owner's eyes dripping blood must roll a horror check. This is a relatively mild event and, therefore, a +2 bonus applies. The bonus is not applied if the owner's clothing, face, or gear are covered in blood. For example, a character who falls asleep will weep through the night, drenching everything in blood. Anyone seeing him just before he wakes would truly be horrified at the sight of this person lying in a large pool of blood. Even the owner of the blood coin must roll a horror check (no bonus) the first time he realizes what is happening. Thereafter, he doesn't need to roll further horror checks for this effect. However, if he fails his horror check, the effects are permanent until he can rid himself of the coin.

Gold Pieces Swindled	Approx. Weeping Duration
10	1.5 hours
100	17 hours
150	1 day
1,000	1 week

If the owner of the *blood coin* is not currently weeping, he can make a quick fortune. Once he begins weeping, he unlikely to be able to spend his money. He could well go cold and hungry, sleeping in a damp alley on a pile of coins. Thieves might soon rob him of his ill-gotten gains, assuming that they were not frightened away by his appearance.

Anyone weeping blood can be automatically trailed and hunted by animals or creatures using their senses of smell. Rangers and the like get a +4 bonus for tracking him. Vampires can scent the blood at a distance of 100 feet per age category.

Until the first time the owner attempts to swindle or cheat someone, the coin can be given or thrown away. It cannot be used for a purchase unless it is the last coin in the person's purse (otherwise, the coin will automatically return to the purse and be replaced by a coin of the same or higher value from the purse). Once its possessor tries to cheat someone, the coin becomes attached to its new owner and helps him with that bargain. He can feel the power of the coin at work, and he knows that it is responsible for his success. From that point on, the coin appears to be coated in dried blood that cannot be wiped off.

Once it has found an owner, the coin is not easily gotten rid of. If given away or used to make a purchase, it reappears in the owner's purse, and a coin of like or greater value from that purse replaces it. If thrown away, the same thing happens, with another coin taking the place of the lost *blood coin*. It remains out of its owner's pocket so long as he stays within 30 feet of it. It cannot be melted or destroyed by normal means.

To be rid of it, the owner must give away all his earthly possessions and wander the world as a beggar for a full year. The only possessions he retains are rags for clothes and the *blood coin* itself. At the end of the year, he is able to give it to the person of his choice. He cannot buy anything with the coin or throw it away. He must find someone willing to accept the coin. He does not have to explain the nature of the *blood coin* to whomever takes it. However, most folk are not likely to want to take a blood-encrusted coin.

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